(*Musée Carnavalet*)

PORTRAIT OF GEORGE SAND BY CHARPENTIER

THE SEVEN STRINGS OF THE LYRE

The Romantic Life of
GEORGE SAND
1804–1876

BY
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To

HENRI AMIC

It may be that you, who lived close to her and perhaps saw her with other eyes, will find in this presentation of your beloved friend some things with which you are not in full sympathy. I trust not, however, for it was you who revealed to me her soul, when, standing beside the desk where she used to work, your hands reverently touching her precious herbarium, you said to me, with deep emotion :

" I have never known any one who was so good ! "

"Une barque pleine d'amis qui chantent des airs délicieux, vient à moi sur la fleuve rapide. Ils m'appellent, ils me tendent les bras. . . . 'Viens donc,' me disent-ils; 'que fais-tu sur cette triste rive? Viens chanter avec nous; viens boire dans nos coupes. Voici des fleurs; voici des instruments.' Et ils me présentent une harpe d'une forme étrange. Mes doigts semblent y être habitués depuis longtemps; j'en tire des sons divins, et ils m'écoutent avec attendrissement. . . . Nous sautons à terre, nous nous élançons, en courant et en chantant, à travers les buissons embaumés. Mais alors tout disparaît et je m'éveille."

Lettres d'un Voyageur.

FOREWORD

THE story of the life of George Sand is contained in her Memoirs, her letters, her novels and her prefaces. The frankest, sincerest, and, at the same time, the least egotistical of women, she could not write a line without revealing herself. The selection and grouping of these revelations, the attempt to place them upon a clear and vivid background, is the humble office of the biographer.

Every opinion, sentiment and motive attributed to her in this volume is quoted or paraphrased from her own written words, or, at least, inspired by them. In some instances, the testimony of her friends has been invoked. But as the book does not aim to be a chronicle, a slight arrangement, or foreshortening of events has occasionally been resorted to in order to fit the requirements of the frame selected. This, however, in no way affects any important sequence of the facts or emotions of her life.

And since the form of presentation has not permitted any external judgment or comment on this remarkable woman, the writer offers the following quotation from her friend and critic, Joseph Mazzini, as important to bear in mind, before attempting to follow George Sand through the varied and agitated course of her life of seventy-two years.

" There are (intelligences) whose understanding develops little by little and progressively, as in the evolution of Grecian architecture, so that the unity shines forth only in the mass. It is only by embracing the mass of its successive expressions, by running through every page in the life of the writer, that we can seize and estimate it ; a fragment, a detached portion, will never yield the secret."

ELIZABETH W. SCHERMERHORN.

ROME, *February* 12, 1927.

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Line Drawings in the Text

The drawings on pages 42, 65, 164, 188, and 250 are from *Horace*, *Lélia*, *Un Hiver à Majorque*, *Spiridion* and *Aldo le Rimeur*, in the Complete Works of George Sand, of 1851–6, illustrated by Tony Johannot and Maurice Sand.

The head on page 52 is after a drawing in the Musée Carnavalet, formerly called "George Sand," but recently questioned. That on page 143 is by Tony Johannot, from "La Course à Chamounix."

The drawing on page 52, representing George Sand as an Andalousian, is from the Notebook of Alfred de Musset.

The drawing of Gargilesse on page 262 is from an illustration in "George Sand et le Berry" by Mlle. L. Vincent. That of Nohant on page 285 is a pencil sketch by Maurice Sand, reproduced, as are all the portraits of Mme. Sand and her family, by permission of Mme. Aurore Lauth-Sand.

The vignettes on pages 22 and 74 appear in "Les Muses Romantiques," by Marcel Bouteron, ed. Goupy, 1926.

The sketch on page 302 is reproduced from the programme of the exercises at La Châtre in August, 1926, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of George Sand, and represents her statue in the park of La Châtre and a Berrichon "gars" with his *cornemuse*.

THE SEVEN STRINGS OF THE LYRE

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CHAPTER I

SLEEPING WATER

"Un caractère indolent, silencieux, calme comme l'eau de cette source qui n'a pas un pli à sa surface, mais qu'un grain de sable bouleverse."[1]

Lettres d'un Voyageur.

In the early part of the nineteenth century before Paris had yet entered upon the era of boulevards, department stores and tramways that has destroyed so many landmarks, there still stood in the Rue des Fossès-Saint-Victor a great, bare, ugly building, pierced by a small arched gate, to which a high flight of steps ascended. This was the Convent des Anglaises, founded during the dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell by a Catholic order seeking a refuge in Paris from the persecutions of the English Protestants whom they had persecuted first. Having survived the storms of 1789, when it served as a prison for some of the great ladies whom it had educated, this ancient convent finally succumbed to the revolution of 1830, but at the time we are concerned with it still enjoyed among the best families of Paris a vogue quite equal that of the Sacré-Cœur or the Abbaye-aux-Bois. All the nuns were English, Irish or Scotch, and, in passing through the cloisters and chapel, one trod on the worn funeral effigies, death's-heads and mortuary epitaphs of pious and distinguished exiles from Protestant England whose bones were crumbling beneath, and portraits of English prelates and princes, among them that of the saintly

[1] "An indolent, silent nature, calm as the water of this spring, that has not a ripple on its surface, but that is disturbed to its depths by a grain of sand."—*Letters of a Traveller.*

Mary Stuart, adorned the walls for the edification of those privileged persons who were admitted to the private parlour of the Lady Superior. Nevertheless, the young daughters of the *Petite Noblesse*, as well as young ladies from the best Catholic families of England, were sent there with the certainty of being carefully guarded and thoroughly instructed, and the masters brought in to form them in the accomplishments and graces indispensable to their correct fulfilment of the social obligations which life would lay upon them, were of the highest renown in their respective professions. In short, the relatives of a young person educated at the Convent des Anglaises might be reasonably sure that after a stay of two or three years she would return to them with a *cachet* of distinction and elegance which could not fail to bring her speedy and rich matrimonial rewards.

One day in the winter of 1817 a *fiacre* stopped before the little arched door of this amiable prison, and a tall blonde lady of middle age, with the bearing of a *grande-dame*, in spite of her sober and unfashionable dress, descended from it, leading by the hand a little girl of about fourteen, with large solemn black eyes, brown skin, and the sturdy, impassive bearing of a peasant child. The child wore a very new suit of purple serge, the uniform prescribed for the young ladies of the convent. The coachman carried a modest trunk up the steps and deposited it in the *portier's* room, and the grilled gates closed upon the two visitors.

Mme. Dupin de Francueil had taken the long three days journey by coach from her château in Berry, and had opened her apartment in the Rue Neuves des Mathurins, in order to place with appropriate ceremony her only granddaughter in this convent where she herself had twice resided, once as a *pensionnaire*, and once, less pleasantly, as a prisoner under the Terrorist Government. She was the widow of the wealthy and *dilettante* Dupin de Francueil, whose best claim to immortality was that he had been the lover of the *spirituelle* Mme. d'Epinay, celebrated as the patroness of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and as the friend of that newsmonger of Frederic the Great, the Baron Grimm. Being almost twice the age of his youthful, and second, wife, Francueil had succeeded in planting firmly in her

serious and malleable mind the principles and creed of the author of *Émile*, and the philosophical heresies of his irreligious contemporaries which were fashionable when he and Mme. d'Epinay were young and venturesome. Mme. Dupin, therefore, was a Deist, and as she never went to mass or encouraged the priestly profession in any but a social and neighbourly spirit, she had carefully refrained from burdening her granddaughter, Aurore Dupin, with useless and technical religious instruction, beyond such easily effaced articles of faith as had been imparted by the parish priest in preparation for Aurore's first communion. It will be seen, however, that the well-bred Mme. Dupin knew when to bend to recognised social requirements and conventions. She had the aristocrat's repugnance for excess and sensationalism, even in questions of conscience.

Moreover, her experiments with the educational theories of Jean Jacques had not been wholly satisfactory in their practical application, and Aurore had proved a tough morsel for the Rousseau system to digest. At an extremely early age she had manifested a stubbornness and impatience of control, together with distressing habits of reverie and absentmindedness which were fatal to the successful performance of tasks. The preceptor of *Émile* had neglected to provide a method for dealing with her alarming cataleptic periods, when she would sit for hours, looking like a young idiot, her mouth open, her hands hanging motionless at her side, and her great eyes fixed, whether in philosophic contemplation or in mystic ecstasy, there was no means of determining. Mme. Dupin felt that young companions might offer an antidote to these daydreams, but the Château of Nohant was separated by several miles of bad roads from the social opportunities offered by the small town of La Châtre, and Aurore's playmates were limited to peasant children from the rude old cottages that clustered outside the great iron gates of the château.

The educational precepts of *Émile* admitted no caste prejudices, and, accordingly, she had been allowed to associate freely with the Berrichon peasants, driving the pigs with Plaisir the swineherd, raking hay, tending the sheep, climbing trees for birds' nests, and listening to hobgoblin tales told in the soft Berrichon dialect by the old *chanvreur*, or flax-comber

of the village, when he made his annual rounds. Such elegant instruction in music, drawing, and literature, as Mme. Dupin had herself been able to offer as a supplement to the method of example and reasoning advocated in *Émile* was offset by the harsh and eccentric tutorial methods of an old gentleman in nankeen leggings, who played the flageolette, and had a passion for Latin. This bizarre person, a sort of Gallic Dr. Johnson, was named Deschartres. He had been the tutor of Mme. Dupin's only son, now dead, and later became the steward of her estate. He united to his enthusiasm for the classics an equal zeal for the practice of medicine and surgery, and, as he entertained unorthodox views on the equality of the sexes, he was undeniably a dangerous guide for a very young person belonging to the upper classes. Mme. Dupin, beholding meditatively the work that she and Deschartres and Rousseau together had wrought, did not find it good ; she anxiously took counsel of her natural brother, the genial and worldly Abbé de Beaumont, and of several elderly countesses, faded ghosts of the old *régime*, who, living in Paris, might be trusted to have kept up with the times, and decided, not without conscientious misgivings, to deliver over her *enfant terrible* to the discreet ministrations of the Sisters at the Convent des Anglaises.

" My child, you do not seem to have common sense," she said to Aurore when the moment came to break the news to her; " You have inherited an excellent intelligence from your father and grandparents, but you do all in your power to appear an idiot. You could be attractive, but you take pride in looking like a fright. Your complexion is tanned, your hands are rough, your feet are all out of shape in those *sabots* you insist on wearing. You have no bearing, no grace, no tact. Your brain is getting as deformed as your body. Sometimes you hardly answer when spoken to, and you put on the air of a bold creature who scorns her human companions. Sometimes you chatter like a silly magpie; you have a good heart but a bad head. We must change all this. Besides, you need instruction in the accomplishments befitting your social position."

Aurore listened in silence, a provoking habit of hers which baffled and annoyed her grandmother. Finally, she asked if

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PASTEL OF GEORGE SAND AS A CHILD

she would see her mother in Paris. " I suppose so," said Mme. Dupin coldly. She began to despair of ever making this dull child understand that her mother was a very vulgar and impossible person who, besides being common and frivolous and ignorant, was still persisting in a quite unmentionable career upon which she had started before Aurore's father, Maurice Dupin, had made her his mistress, and had gallantly, all too gallantly, married her. Only a few days before, believing that the time had come for perfect frankness about the dangers of this unfortunate inheritance, Mme. Dupin had solemnly narrated to Aurore the shocking history of her mother's tarnished past, things that one can say but once, and that leave a bad taste behind. The child had listened stolidly, kneeling like a little penitent at her grandmother's bedside with her cold little hands in Mme. Dupin's hot ones, and when the sordid story was finished, she had departed, dumb and apparently unmoved, to her own room, where she had locked herself in and emerged some hours later more stubborn and sphinx-like than ever, and without one little screw loosened in her morbid passion for that lost soul, Sophie Delaborde Dupin.

" Yes," Mme. Dupin said in response to her question, " you will see her and afterwards you will be separated from her as well as from me for the time necessary to complete your education." Aurore was unperturbed by this awful fate. " That's all right," she said to herself. " I don't know what a convent is like, but at any rate it will be a change, and I am tired of the life I live here, anyway."

Mme. Dupin resolved to see to it that the child was not permitted to visit her mother on her holidays. " If she wishes to go out she may go to my stepson's family, the Villeneuves of Chenonceaux," she thought. But it was discovered later that Aurore did not care to go out.

It was the hour of recess, when they arrived at the convent, and while Mme. Dupin was proudly explaining to the Mother Superior (a stout placid lady, whose imposing worldliness was tempered by a shrewd understanding of human nature), the exceptional and enlightened educational *régime* she had adopted for her granddaughter, Aurore was being escorted around the garden by one of the most dignified of the young

ladies, and was subjected to a critical examination from seventy pairs of eyes. Quite undaunted, she surveyed with interest the agricultural possibilities of the garden ; the culture of flowers, she afterwards learned, was delegated to the youngest children, and her open interest at once disqualified her for more advanced social connections. She joined with goodwill in a game of prisoner's base, and atoned for her ignorance of the rules by the agility of her legs. She was escorted back to the parlour of the Mother Superior just in time to hear that estimable lady puncture Mme. Dupin's exposition of her grandchild's advanced intellectual grade, by declaring as a finality that not having yet received the sacrament of confirmation, she would have to enter the youngest class.

The painful moment of parting from her grandmother had come, and Mme. Dupin was grieved at the lack of emotion she displayed, and departed with her handkerchief to her eyes. " My dear," said a kindly little old nun who stood near, what did you say to your grandmother that pained her so ? " " I did not say anything at all ! " answered Aurore in amazement. " That child will make either a devil or a saint," thought the Mother Superior. " At present she is sleeping water."

* * * * *

Aurore Dupin had not entered the Convent des Anglaises alone. She had brought with her an intimate and constant companion, but he was of a subtle essence, and not apprehensible even to the keen perceptions of the Mother Superior. Although endowed with virtues and powers closely resembling those of the godlike heroes of the Iliad and Jerusalem Delivered, and of other romantic epics on which Aurore's literary taste had been nourished, this secret friend was like the angels, an ageless, sexless spirit, of vague physical attributes. He came and went unbidden ; whether she wandered in the fields or dreamed over her books or lay half asleep in her bed, alone or in company, Aurore carried him with her secretly everywhere. Even his name, Corambé, had been a mysterious evolution, supernaturally conceived, and, like his presence, unevoked by her consciousness. In the romantic setting of the convent, in its mysterious, labyrinthine corridors, on its staircases leading to walled-up doors or to empty ruined rooms

littered with crumbling fragments of Gothic carvings, in the vast, quiet garden where chestnut trees threw deep shadows, and luxuriant jasmine and ivy curtained the high walls that shut out the noises of the busy world, Corambé found an environment on which his mystic spirit thrived. But in the naked, time-stained ugliness of the class-rooms and dormitories he pined and wilted. Before the bareness of theological exegesis he fled precipitately. The fate of infants who died in their sins and the nature of the place of exile where they languished was a subject on which Aurore's inner light failed her.

Questioned by the good Mother Alippe, who presided over the class in religious instruction, as to her conception of the post-mortem condition of unbaptised children, Aurore confidently affirmed that they returned to the bosom of their heavenly father.

" What are you thinking about, that you answer so ? " cried poor Mother Alippe. " You were not listening to me. I ask you again, where do the souls of dead infants go ? " Aurore was speechless. A compassionate little neighbour whispered " In Limbo." " In Olympus ! " exclaimed Aurore derisively, scenting a practical joke. " For shame ! " cried the horrified Mother Alippe. " Are you jesting during catechism ? " But being a pure and trusting soul she accepted Aurore's protestations of good faith, only exacting that she should cross herself as an effective antidote to the spirit of levity. Another scandal ! Aurore did not know how to make the sign of the cross correctly ! Her misinformed nurse at Nohant had taught her to begin at the right shoulder. This enormity was unpardonable, even by the long-suffering Mother Alippe.

" Have you always made it like that ? "

" My God, yes ! "

" You are swearing, my child."

" I do not think so."

" But where have you come from ? You are a pagan, a real pagan ! " And Aurore, in expiation of such an extraordinary upbringing, was condemned to wear her nightcap to the class-room.

The young ladies at the Convent des Anglaises fell by pre-

destination into three natural divisions, before which the conventional divisions of social ranks were levelled for the time being. There were the *dévotes*, the *sages* and the *diables*. Aurore's deficiencies of heart and mind seemed to mark her for the ranks of the devils, where opened her only opportunity for distinction. She threw herself with such fervour into the evil practices of this band of lost souls that she soon rose to leadership. The most wicked deed hitherto conceivable to the limited imaginations of the devils had been the attempt to outwit the *portier* and get a brief but fascinating glimpse of the Rue des Fossés from the top of the steps. Under the inspiration of Aurore their sins assumed a romantic, almost *Corambic* guise, as they tiptoed at midnight through the mazes of dark cellars and attics, in search of a mythical VICTIM believed to have been walled up alive in the thick masonry of the convent. In these satanic escapades Aurore was exhilarated by the pleasurable consciousness of having attracted the pious interest of the most popular nun in the convent, Madame Alicia, whom the pupils called " the Pearl." The beautiful and graceful figure of Madame Alicia could not be disguised under the folds of her robe and coiffe, and the magnificence of her long black eyelashes and tenderness of her blue eyes that were wells of purity, offset a superabundance of nose and deficiencies of mouth and chin. Aurore meditated on these eyes in the watches of the night, and derived solid satisfaction from the sensation of being the object of the prayers and solicitude of this radiant being. Madame Alicia had well-nigh supplanted her unseen companion Corambé, for, like the Lady of Shalott, Aurore was already half-sick of shadows and her adolescent soul was groping for a material embodiment of her ideals. But this infidelity was averted by the sudden transformation of the fluid, but enduring Corambé into a mystic semblance of the divine Bridegroom to Whom Madame Alicia had pledged her heart.

Deserting the peripatetic devils, Aurore began to frequent the chapel at dusk on warm spring evenings when the fragrance of jasmine floated in from the garden through the open door of the cloister, and the lamps glowing under the Gothic arches of the Sanctuary and reflected in the stone pavement, half-

revealed the silent veiled forms of the nuns prostrated before the Holy of Holies. An altarpiece representing St. Augustine, the patron of the convent, receiving supernaturally the divine revelation under a fig tree, excited her interest in that great sinner. After a youth of appalling *diableries*, he had been made over into a great saint, whom time had adorned with a halo and jewelled robes. From St. Augustine she was led to contemplation of the life and conversion of the apostle Paul, who, while engaged in the active persecution of saints had been smitten by a heavenly vision. She was too deep in sin, a leader of the weak in ways of iniquity, a persecutor of the virtuous. She was haunted by the words that St. Augustine heard, *Tolle, Legere ;* and repeated to herself over and over, " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? "

Her conversion was swift and intense, and astonished the nuns and her young followers alike. The girls said, " Saint Aurore had been in love with the devil and had fallen in the holy water basin." Any conscientious scruples about deserting the heresies of her ancestors were dispelled under the influence of a sudden and violent friendship with a fanatical young convert, a sort of consumptive Scotch Jean d'Arc, who had heard supernatural voices when tending sheep on the upland moors of her father's farm, bidding her brave the displeasures of her Free Kirk parents, and become the Bride of Heaven. Aurore admired her simplicity of faith as much as her heroism and longed to be persecuted for righteousness' sake too. Like St. Theresa, in whom also she became greatly interested, Aurore was consumed by internal flames of love and aspiration. She neither slept nor ate. She adopted several varieties of bodily chastisement and lived in a state of rapt ecstasy. Moreover she became good and industrious.

The nuns of the Convent des Anglaises were practical, unimaginative people. They discouraged Aurore's visions and ecstasies and frowned upon the frequency of her communions. They were disposed to doubt the sincerity, or at least the permanence, of her conversion, and checked her determination to become a *religieuse*. Nevertheless, the summer passed in a state of perfect beatitude until the death and funeral of Mother Alippe shocked Aurore out of her dreamy meditations

among the roses and jasmine. It was her first realisation of physical suffering and corruption. The period of exaltation had passed, and an overwhelming depression succeeded to it. She began to be harassed by doubts of her own worthiness. " Many are called but few are chosen," that terrible text that has wrecked the mental equilibrium of so many tortured souls, now rose as a fearful barrier between Aurore and the rapture of frequent partaking of the Blessed Sacrament. She was pursued by dread of committing a sin between confession and communion. Fortunately she had a wise Jesuit confessor who had no idea of allowing his flock to become so absorbed in the contemplation of the next world as to forget the art of conducting themselves gracefully in this. Divining that the maladies of Mlle. Dupin's soul arose from an excessive persecution of the flesh, he exacted as a penance that she return to the games and companions suitable to her age and station. " Run in the garden with the others, my child. Jump rope, and play tag. When you have recovered your appetite and sleep, your brain will cease to be tormented by imaginary faults."

This was the worst penance that could have been devised for an overwrought young soul. " I have lost the taste for play," pleaded Aurore, " and the habit of gaiety, and my spirit is so flighty that if I do not watch myself constantly, I shall forget God and my salvation." " Not a bit of it," laughed the genial priest. " Now, however, you are making piety unpopular among your mates by the austerity of your practice. Render the faith you profess attractive by the charm of your manners and appearance. Remember that Jesus commanded his disciples to have clean hands and perfumed hair ; perfume, therefore, your heart with graciousness and your spirit with gaiety."

Aurore was greatly impressed with the sweet reasonableness of this argument. At fifteen it is not difficult to recover one's tastes for games and social intercourse. She was amazed to find that amusements at first entered upon in a spirit of submission soon became a pleasure and then a passion. Anxieties about the wrath of God and the salvation of her soul no longer mingled with her religious exercises, and piety became a tranquil, gladsome thing, like those fair gardens of Fra Angelico,

where gentle nuns and monks and smiling angels gambol in innocent and affectionate intercourse. And even as the wise Jesuit had prophesied, earthly rewards followed abundantly upon this reconstructed piety. Aurore, radiating practical Christianity, beheld all hearts at her feet; nuns, teachers, big and little girls, basking in the glow of the religion of little kindnesses. The *diables* were subdued, the *dévotes* were stimulated to be better, and the *bêtes* took heart and made surprising strides along the path of knowledge and righteousness.

But happiness, even virtuous happiness, is such a fragile flower! You clasp it and its bloom is shed. At this supreme moment of Faith Triumphant when Aurore, having successfully staged a camouflaged Molière play in honour of the Mother Superior's birthday, was at the pinnacle of fame and popularity, Mme. Dupin again entered upon the scene. Perhaps rumours of her granddaughter's religious enthusiasm had disturbed her. At all events, she announced that the hour had struck for Aurore to leave the convent and give her attention to the selection of a husband, a rite rendered more pressing by her own rapidly failing health. This was a terrible anti-climax, and Aurore felt that the hand of the Lord had been laid upon her over-heavily. To the grief of parting from the good nuns and the wise confessor and her many young admirers was added the apprehension of that mysterious person, so perpetually and variously contemplated by young lady *pensionnaires*—a husband. But her grandmother looked so ill and weary that she refrained from troubling her just then with the news of her decision to become a nun, and departed with her as meekly and unprotestingly as she had arrived.

* * * * *

Aurore had been absent at the convent two and a half years when, in the spring of 1820, she returned with her grandmother to Nohant. In honour of her return her room had been painted and repapered in lilac, and the bed was draped in fresh chintz. As she opened her window to the warm spring sun, a sense of youth, of freedom, of an unknown new existence stretching before her, rushed in with the sweet breath of fresh, tender, growing things. All was right with the

world! And discarding her convent uniform for a livelier iris, she donned a fresh, bright frock, caught back her thick glossy curls with a becoming wide ribbon bow, and descended to the garden which was like an immense bouquet, offering its fragrance and colour in homage to her youth and goodness. For, in contrast to the little girl who had once played in that garden, she was very, very good.

All sorts of tender associations were awakened as she walked down the long shady path to the bottom of the garden. Here was the lilac thicket where she and her mother had once built a little bower of bright stones and mosses gathered along the beautiful banks of the Indre not far away, with miniature caves and grottos and parterres, which her grandmother had thought silly; and here was the bench where she used to meditate tearfully on the sad refrain the children sang in their games:

Nous n'irons plus aux bois,
Les lauriers sont coupés.

Here was the tree where that big teasing boy, Hippolyte Chatiron who, in some remarkable way, had turned out to be her brother, used to hang her doll upside down. There was the pear tree beneath which her little blind baby brother was buried, and down at the turn of the road to La Châtre was the great poplar tree where her father had been killed by a fall from his horse, a tragedy she could just remember, associated with black clothes and ghost stories whispered by the servants. Her old friends, the peasants, came to greet her in their wooden sabots and long blue smocks, and their quaint Berrichon speech was music to her ears. The old dogs wagged their tails and wriggled at her feet, and everybody, from her former playmates, Solange and Marie, to crusty old Deschartres, called her Mademoiselle. The homecoming was a great success. The anguish of the parting from the Convent des Anglaises rolled off like clouds after a thunderstorm. She forgot that she wanted to be a nun, or that anyone wanted her to choose a husband.

From the gravelled terrace a low flight of stone steps led to the glass doors of the white-panelled dining room, with the salon on one side and her grandmother's bedroom and boudoir

on the other ; dark, heavily-curtained rooms, with Louis XVI. furniture, and many family portraits. Her grandparents had been inordinate readers, and the best minds of the eighteenth century were stowed away in dull calf bindings behind the wooden panels of the bookcases—the kind of minds the nuns would certainly have thought it not wise for a young girl to investigate. But Mme. Dupin put no restrictions on her granddaughter's reading ; Voltaire, alone, being under the ban until she should be thirty. And had not the Jesuit confessor said that the soul filled with divine love need be afraid of nothing ? Aurore stretched forth her hand confidently, eagerly. It rested on the works of Chateaubriand : *René*, *Le Génie du Christianisme*. Next to *René* stood *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

From the dim old walls the portraits of her forbears watched her sardonically. Her grandfather, Dupin de Francueil, in a grey coat with diamond buttons, his hair turned up with a lady-like comb, seated before an easel, palette in hand, looked at her quizically over his shoulder. The sharp, beady eyes of his old mistress, Mme. d'Epinay, gleamed at her a little spitefully from beneath a broad, white, intelligent brow. Opposite, in Latour's best manner, Aurore's great-grandfather, the brave and *gallant* Count Maurice de Saxe, illegitimate son of the Elector of Poland, florid, powdered, the blue sash of the Saint Esprit and the white scarf of a Marshal of France across his breast, stared at her with bold, merry blue eyes. And his mother, the notoriously beautiful Aurore de Koenigsmark, with flaming cheeks and coal-black hair, her filmy drapery slipping back to display her round, white breasts, half parted her bright coral lips in a sensual smile. Other faces gleamed in the dusk—Maurice Dupin, her father, handsome, dreamy, poetical, very boyish in his blue uniform : her step-uncle, the Archbishop of Arles, bastard son of old Francueil ; Mlle. de Verrières, the beautiful young lady who belonged to an opera troop and who had born to Marshal Saxe, without benefit of the clergy, that second Aurore, now Mme. Dupin ; and the fair-haired Hippolyte Chatiron, more peasant than Dupin, but of whom her father had said to his wife, " he is mine as Caroline is yours." Aurore had learned from her grandmother's lips on that dreadful night more than two years ago, how

Caroline, with her turned-up nose and neat blond tresses had happened to be Sophie Delaborde's child!

And while they crowded about her, these bold, ardent, sensual, painted faces—the pale, earnest young creature in whose veins their hot blood was beating, sat reading eagerly, uninterruptedly, hour after hour, and far into the long, still, lonely nights. The old walls of the Château de Nohant melted away, and Aurore was wandering in the primeval forests of America, by the shores of blue Alpine lakes under the starry sky. Corambé forsook his priestlike tasks to bear her company, and became a naked outcast, a pariah, the victim of man's inhumanity to man, cursing whatever gods there be, and battering his unconquerable soul against the tyranny of a society calling itself Law. How far these two companions had strayed from Fra Angelico's garden of peace and love! Conscience-stricken, Aurore sought for her precious copy of the Imitation of Christ, inscribed with her name by the long, cold, white hand of Madame Alicia; but laid it aside, for she saw it was full of unsuspected sophisms and naïve lapses of logic. On reflection, she decided it was the book of the cloister *par excellence*, the code of the tonsured, and returned to Chateaubriand.

Alas, for the good Jesuit confessor's sublime trust! Following the star of TOLLE, LEGERE, Aurore pursued her voyage of discovery through her grandmother's bookshelves. Leibnitz, Pascal, Locke, Montaigne—with certain passages marked "omit"; then Hamlet, Byron, Werther. Stirred to the depths of her romantic little heart, she longed to be a creature consumed by nameless sorrows, and overwhelmed by immeasurable remorse; to have committed a crime which would make her feel the bitterness of despair. Then Scott calmed her emotion and she decided she would prefer to be a brave mountaineer, and live a life of adventure. Thus, during the months that followed, in the quiet house where Mme. Dupin was slowly dying, the little granddaughter whom she must soon leave to fight alone against the demons of her inheritance, was storing up in her wonderfully receptive mind the whole literature of romanticism and of mysticism. The leaven of the mass was the godlike Rousseau, the man of sorrow and of sentiment.

And the Spirit of Revealed Religion prepared to fold its tents and depart.

* * * * *

Before Mme. Dupin had a chance to secure a suitable husband for the heiress of Nohant, she suffered a stroke of apoplexy. For ten months she lingered, clouded in mind and feeble in body. Meanwhile the pillars of the social life of La Châtre, the nearest settlement to Nohant, rarely lacked for spicy and enlivening topics of domestic and neighbourly comment. Aurore, left free to express herself according to her own lights, exhibited a marvellous fertility in the art of scandalising public opinion by her frank unconventionality and the independence of her opinions. The good dames of La Châtre gathered their offspring under their wings and flew to shelter behind their garden hedges when she came galloping down the road astride her pony, in breeches, smock and gaiters, with two big dogs beside her, and her little groom, André, at her heels, clinging desperately to his mount, and bearing her brace of pistols. When she had disappeared in a cloud of dust the matrons emerged from their hiding-places and warned their young sons to keep out of her way.

The young sons, however, manifested a disturbing masculine inclination to tolerance towards this extraordinary girl. Charles Duvernet and Alphonse Fleury had played with Aurore when they were in petticoats, and considered it only neighbourly to recall it. Jules Néraud, an ardent botanist, was agitated and flattered to have caught her red-handed in the theft of a new species of dahlia, which had nodded to her over the top of his garden wall as she cantered by. In short, the male youth of La Châtre privately agreed that Aurore Dupin had fine eyes, a good seat in her saddle, and could shake hands with the lads without blushing and behaving like an amorous turkey-hen as the other girls did.

But no masculine condoning of the eccentricities of a handsome young woman ever improved her standing with his mothers and sisters. A goodly amount of legendary matter grew up about the character and personality of the future châtelaine of Nohant. She was said to take snuff, smoke, and read heretical books all night by the bedside of her dying

grandmother. These charges were well substantiated. The gossips went further, however. She had been seen to carry the sacred Host away from the altar rail in her handkerchief, and had once entered the church on horseback. She was devoted to occult studies, and had been seen at midnight digging up bodies in the cemetery in order to dissect them, under the direction of the ghoulish Deschartres. She danced the *bourrée* with the peasants at village fêtes ; she received young gentlemen in her room, and gave them rendezvous in the fields when she was hunting. Some of these stories reached the ears of the simple old curé of La Châtre. He had often enjoyed the good cheer of Mme. Dupin's table and fireside, notwithstanding her unorthodox views, and now that the poor lady was helpless he felt a special obligation to protect her harum-scarum granddaughter, who was left to the guidance of that amazing old boor, Deschartres. The well-intentioned curé, therefore, took advantage of the confessional to put a few leading questions to Aurore in regard to a certain young medical student, whose name had been linked with hers in an unseemly manner. Aurore was indignant. Her confessor at the convent had declared it bad form to ask questions at confession, outside of the formula. She considered the good curé's probings not only indiscreet and indelicate, but entirely irrelevant. Such matters had nothing to do with religion. She rose from her knees without answering the implied charge and left the church, never to return to it. But her abandonment of the forms of religion in no way affected the fervour of her belief in the Immanence of Divine Love, as explained by Leibnitz and interpreted by Jean Jacques. On the contrary, it was strengthened by the consciousness of her superior illumination. Moreover, interesting new horizons had been opened by her study of anatomy and physiology under the enthusiastic guidance of Deschartres. To the old tutor's zeal was added the tender encouragement of the medical student, already referred to, Stéphane de Grandsaigne, who was spending his vacation on the neighbouring estate of his parents. Aurore was persuaded that a knowledge of osteology would enable her to be useful to the peasants of the hamlet, who had bones to be set, cuts to be sewn up, and broken heads to be mended. She

astonished Grandsaigne by her stoicism over a dissection, and won his admiration by her enthusiasm for the legs and arms he brought her instead of the conventional books and nosegays. He loaned her the entire skeleton of a little girl, and although it disturbed her for several nights by emerging from the bureau drawer where she kept it, and drawing her bed curtains apart, Aurore succeeded in conquering these morbid fancies and subduing the waggish bones so that they consented to stay in the drawer all winter.

Since her conversations with Stéphane were always purely pedagogic, she felt fully justified in her resentment of the curé's suspicions. Stéphane was a serious, rather heavy youth, with a long, square jaw, and, moreover, he showed symptoms of consumption. It could not for a moment be supposed that he could aspire to compete with any of the desirable pretendants who had been considered before Mme. Dupin's illness, for his parents, though noble, had found the education of ten children (some of whom had stained the scutcheon by serious misdemeanours) ruinous to their finances, and were known to be in reduced circumstances. In order to discourage any possibility of a sentimental episode, however, Aurore had given Stéphane many assurances, based on passages from Werther and Byron, of the dead and unresponsive state of her affections, and had talked depressingly about her strong inclination for the life of a religious celebate. In the course of the argument by which Stéphane attempted to dissuade her from such a mournful fate, Aurore was shocked to discover that he had outstripped her on the road to radicalism, for while she had stopped short at scepticism, he had reached the point of negation, and boldly denied, not human virtue merely, but the actual existence of God. When he returned to his studies in Paris they corresponded, and she endeavoured to bring him to a less desperate view of the universe. One day she received a fervent letter beginning: "Truly philosophic soul, you are right, but you are the truth that kills!"—an allusion to the soundness of her arguments in favour of the convent. Aurore was astonished. She showed the letter to Deschartres, and he was astonished too. He was not an expert in the affairs of the heart, but it was his opinion that the letter

was a declaration of love. On second reading they agreed that it might be regarded as merely an assent to her opinions. She decided to give Stéphane the benefit of the doubt and replied with a discreet suggestion that he abandon speculative philosophy and devote himself exclusively to scientific research. The epistolary friendship cooled after that, and it was some time before they succeeded in placing their friendship on a satisfactory basis.

* * * * *

At daybreak on Christmas morning, 1821, the bells of the little church just outside the château gates changed their joyous peals for the feast of Nativity into mournful tolling for the departure of a pure soul. Mme. Dupin's last words to the granddaughter who had nursed her devotedly were " You have lost your best friend." All her property (which had dwindled considerably since the death of Francueil) was left to Aurore, save a pension to her undesirable daughter-in-law, Sophie, and a legacy to Hippolyte Chatiron, fruit of a youthful indiscretion of Maurice Dupin's. In order to prevent any interference from the Delabordes, Mme. Dupin had selected with Aurore's approval René Villeneuve, her step-grandson, as guardian, and there had already been some negotiations for a marriage between Aurore and his son, Léonce.

René de Villeneuve, who had inherited the beautiful old château of Chenonceaux from his mother, was a distinguished gentleman with the exquisite deportment of the *grand monde* which he frequented, and Aurore, who had excited the La Châtre gossips by riding horseback with him when he visited Nohant, liked him very much. She had discovered that he read some of her favourite authors, and that his conversation was like a choice page from the book you admire most. He had encouraged her to believe that she had literary gifts herself, and this, together with the alluring pictures he had painted of life at Chenonceaux, made her future as Villeneuve's ward rather attractive. Aurore always liked new adventures and fresh themes for reverie. The idea of marriage to Léonce, however, whom she vaguely remembered in Paris, left her cold, and when René, arriving at Nohant for the reading of the will, threw out one or two hints as to desirable modifica-

tions of some of her habits and tastes, as concessions to the prejudices of his wife (who was a Guibert), Aurore foresaw possible complications. The arrival of Sophie and a Delaborde reinforcement cooled her enthusiasm for the Villeneuve ideals still more. In spite of everything, Sophie was deliciously chic and piquant, and could be very affectionate if she chose. Moreover, M. de Villeneuve's icily polite manner toward this lady with a past offended Aurore's warm loyalty for all her own people. Sophie's vulgarity at the reading of the will, when she noisily protested against the removal of her daughter (for whom she displayed a sudden and unforeseen attachment) from the natural protection of a lawful mother, caused another revulsion of feeling. Certain crude expressions prejudicial to the character of Mme. Dupin shocked Aurore's tender devotion to the memory of the departed, and suggested to her that the form and speech of the Paris boulevards might be even less congenial than the social prejudices of the fastidious Mme. de Villeneuve. Her mother shone less dazzlingly than on her arrival, and the memory of Mme. Dupin's quiet, refined dignity, and pale intellectual face, acquired a new sanctity.

The Villeneuves would have won the day but for an unfortunate slip by which René betrayed the cloven hoof of " snobbery," for which the pupil of Jean Jacques was ever on the watch. The complete elimination of Sophie Delaborde, it appeared, was the natural corollary of residence at Chenonceaux and of alliance with Léonce. The pure blood of the people asserted itself at that moment, and Aurore hotly proclaimed herself for the progeny of the humble old grandfather who sold birds on the Quai des Oiseaux, and turned her back for ever on the effete social standards of a dilapidated *bon-ton*.

The triumphant Sophie bore off her prize without delay to Mme. Dupin's long-closed Paris apartment, as a fitting scene for the matrimonial campaign. She left the broken-hearted old Deschartres to superintend the affairs at Nohant, and exhibited her ingratitude for her daughter's noble sacrifice by harshly separating her from her Berrichon maid, her pet dog and pony, and (cruellest blow of all) from her precious books. Sophie's prejudices against " learning " were as deep-rooted as the

Villeneuves' " snobbery." Each class, it seems, has its own inherent limitations.

The haughty Villeneuves washed their hands of their kinswoman after this. Neither Mme. René de Villeneuve nor Mme. Auguste de Villeneuve (who was a de Ségur) could be expected to accept her or to assist in the task of finding her a husband, after she had been seen publicly in Paris in company with the tarnished Sophie, the obscure Delaborde tribe, or that absurd, shabby M. Pierret, a bank clerk with St. Vitus' dance, and noisy Republican principles, who had been a faithful admirer and factotum of Sophie and of Maurice Dupin, too, since the days of Aurore's infancy. Such impossible companionship had compromised her for ever with the mothers of any honourable family. In a final interview, Aurore, notwithstanding an inward revolt against the *régime* of Sophie, stoutly asserted her determination to resent all insults to her mother and to see her as often as she pleased. " Your ideas are no doubt correct from a religious point of view," was her cousin's response to her citation of authorities for this noble attitude, " but a man of birth and fortune will never come here to find you, and if you spend the three years of your minority with your mother, you will find it still more difficult to marry well. Marry as you best can. What is it to me if you wed an innkeeper ? If he is a good man, I for my part won't turn my back on him.—But I see your mother hovering uneasily about. No doubt she would like to show me the door." And picking up his hat, the last representative of Mme. Dupin's kin departed, leaving a doleful, but stubborn little maiden behind with the company of her choice.

Aurore's democratic ideals were put to a severe test by the idiosyncrasies of her mother. In order to be happy and gay, that volatile lady required constant excitement and variety. She had an insatiable appetite for new sensations in order to keep her liver working well, and her disposition pleasant ; a change of habitation, quarrels and reconciliations, dinner in one restaurant to-day, in another to-morrow, a variety of toilettes. A lovely new hat was hideous the second time she wore it, and had to be retrimmed. A blond wig worn one day, was discarded for a chestnut one the next day, and by the end

of the week she had decided in favour of her own pretty black hair. She read cheap novels in bed half the night, and the next morning at six would be at work concocting new costumes, new quarrels, and new plans. When angry, there was little left in reserve in the vocabulary of vituperation.

One night, after an orgy of temper and abuse, she had a fit of remorse and became confidential. She called Aurore to her bedside, and, amid tears, laughter and pouts, initiated her into the secrets of all her misfortunes. It was a strange story for a daughter to hear from her mother's lips. Sophie's version gained in piquancy and offered a different point of view from the story as narrated by Mme. Dupin on a certain memorable night.

" After all," she said when she had ended, wiping her eyes and sitting up among her pillows in a becoming cap with pink ribbons, " I do not feel that I am to blame for anything. I can't see that I have done wrong consciously. I was led, often driven, to see and to act in certain ways. My only sin was to have loved. If I hadn't fallen in love with your father I would have been rich, free, careless and without self-reproach ; for the rich lover I left for his sake would never have tried to make a lady of me as your father did. I never had reflected any more than a sparrow. I didn't know A from Z. I said my prayers night and morning, and God never made me feel that He did not accept them. But the moment I took your father I was tormented by troubles and doubts. I was told I was unworthy to love him. To be sure, your father told me to pay no attention to what they said, and as long as he was happy, I was. But I was made to reflect, to question myself, till I got to the point that I was ashamed and hated myself, or rather I detested the people who made me that way, and began to hate your fine society with its pretensions to morals and manners. I had seen enough of its falseness and maliciousness to be able to laugh at it. I detest and curse mankind—at least I do when I think of it," she added naïvely.

This conversation made a deep impression on Aurore. She vowed that her mother's past would be for ever sacred in her eyes, and they embraced tenderly. Sophie fell asleep almost immediately, but Aurore meditated for a long time on that

wonderful phrase: "My only sin was to have loved!" Love in the code of Jean Jacques was a virtue.

Three happy days of perfect harmony succeeded; but it was spring, and Sophie's liver always was troublesome in the spring, and her disposition correspondingly peevish. Moreover, she was making no progress in finding a satisfactory husband for her daughter, and Aurore's presence had begun to be a burden. She threatened to put her in a convent again, but suddenly changed her mind, and announced one day that they were going to visit some old acquaintances of Maurice Dupin's whom she had met the preceding evening at dinner. Aurore received the news with her usual apathy.

M. and Mme. Duplessis lived in a pleasant modern mansion at Melun, near Fontainebleau, with broad pretty lawns and a general aspect of cheerful prosperity. They were unacquainted with Leibnitz or Goethe, but they were generous, kind-hearted people, and liked to see their friends, of whom they had a great many, enjoy themselves. They were genuinely sorry for the pale, peaked young girl whom Sophie presented to them, and thought that a game of romps with their four little girls would be good for her. Aurore, who liked children, was quite ready to join in blind man's buff with gusto, and felt at home immediately. Sophie found the society of the Duplessis and their friends less amusing than her daughter did, and the day after their arrival she declared that she was obliged to return to Paris, but that she would leave Aurore with these kind friends for a few days. She left her there several months.

During that time the amiable M. Duplessis found a husband for her.

CHAPTER II

MARIANNA IN THE MOATED GRANGE

"*La Nature humaine est fragile et pleine de misérables passions. Une seule est grande et belle ; c'est l'amour. Mais c'est une flamme divine qu'il faut garder comme on gardait jadis le feu sacré dans des cassolettes fermées sur un autel d'or ; c'est un parfum qu'il faut envelopper et sceller de peur qu'il ne s'évapore.*"[1]

Le Secrétaire Intime.

THE château de Nohant was a large, plain, comfortable mansion, constructed in 1767 on the remains of a fourteenth-century feudal château, portions of whose walls and round towers still existed. It stood close to the high road that ran from Châteauroux to La Châtre, from which it was screened by tall chestnut trees and thick shrubbery. A dozen humble peasant cottages clustered about the green before its gates, and a low, ancient church, with steep brown roofs and a deep dark porch, made up the village of Nohant. At a short distance from the house the river Indre, which gave its name to the department, curved and wound through the broad and melancholy fields of the Bas-Berry. A utilitarian land, with vast fields of grain and long rows of pollarded trees, destitute of romantic beauty, but not without a certain picturesqueness ; a church tower rising here and there from a blur of low cottages, ruined walls and towers of old castles crumbling under their shroud of ivy.

The social life of the Berrichon was grave and placid, like the country. The gentry were isolated on their scattered estates a large part of the year by impassable roads, swollen streams and extremes of weather. In the pleasant season they remained at home from habit, absorbed in agriculture and the

[1] Human nature is frail and full of miserable passions. One only is great and beautiful, and that is Love. But it is a divine flame, which must be guarded as they used to guard the sacred fire in incense jars on a golden altar ; it is a perfume which must be wrapped up and sealed lest it pass off in a vapour.—*The Private Secretary.*

pleasures of domesticity. The interests of the residents of La Châtre, three miles away, as in most provincial small towns, were centered in the dull happenings of their little circle, and the solitary household at Nohant had touched them only faintly, with a few ripples of mild sensation. After the scandal of her son's marriage and the tragedy of his death, Mme. Dupin had shut herself up with her books and her harp and her sad memories for company, and life at the château had moved on in a sedate, patriarchal manner. A horde of old peasant retainers married and propagated and got their living there, while lands and buildings deteriorated and debts accumulated under the stewardship of the philosophising Deschartres.

This was the heritage to which Aurore Dupin had succeeded on the death of her grandmother, and with which she endowed her husband, when, not long after her eighteenth birthday, she married Casimir Dudevant, an unromantic young man to whom she had been presented by the Roetier-Duplessis when eating ices at Tortoni's. For her kind new friends, the Duplessis of Melun, had come to the rescue of the impatient Sophie. Aurore had been hard to please, but they were tactful, resourceful people, and they manœuvred so dexterously that she believed she had chosen for herself and according to her own heart, and that she was making a marriage of love and not of *convenance*. She was the less critical, because she was impatient to have the marriage question settled once for all, and escape from her mother's tyranny and temper. And she wanted a protector, someone to lean upon and love. It was pleasant, too, to be able to prove to the Villeneuves that she was not damaged goods, and was not obliged to marry an innkeeper.

Casimir Dudevant was well-looking, well-connected, and nine years her senior. He was occupying the interval between a terminated military service and an anticipated matrimonial opening by studying law pleasantly and obscurely in Paris. Like many of Aurore's kin, and like Aurore herself had not a civil ceremony preceded her advent by the narrow margin of a month, he was an illegitimate child, so that he might be trusted not to shy at the shadow of Sophie Delaborde. His father, a well-to-do old Gascon country gentleman, with a dash of Scotch blood, and the tastes of a sporting squire, was a retired colonel

and a baron of the Empire. Having no children by his lawful wife, Baron Dudevant had adopted this natural son as his heir.

Casimir, although not of a demonstrative temperament, was well pleased with his bride and the *dot* she brought him. Her sturdy little figure and independent manners promised well for the wife of a gentleman farmer. His rather obtuse perceptions discovered no danger signals behind her large, somnolent, velvety eyes. Aurore, on her part, had been touched by his good nature in joining in the rather puerile and boisterous amusements of the young people at the home of the Duplessis, which she frankly enjoyed, and was encouraged thereby to believe that he might be led to share her more elevated tastes with equal complacency. In the matter of literature and philosophy, Casimir's advantages had been limited, but she pictured herself tenderly assisting his willing mind along the thorny path, plucking for him fair roses from the works of Rousseau and Montaigne, and even, perhaps, bringing him to the heights upon which Corambé still pursued his mystic way. In the long, quiet evenings at Nohant she would play for him on Mme. Dupin's clavecin quaint little airs from the old Italian composers which had been handed down from her operatic great-grandmother. "Oh, unbelievable joy!" she wrote her best friend at the convent.

But *tête-à-tête* with the husband of your choice is seldom fraught with those pure joys of perfect companionship of which young brides dream. In the early stages of matrimony Casimir, like many another well-intentioned husband, made laudable efforts to follow, or at all events to humour, his leader; but he was frequently caught snoring in the comfortable easy chair while the soporiferous book had slipped to the floor. For the clavecin he displayed an undisguised aversion. Aurore soon abandoned her efforts at education and devoted herself to embroidering tiny caps and bibs, and making little flannel wrappers.

"I have read somewhere," she wrote to her schoolmate, "that for perfect love, people should have similar souls and opposite tastes and habits. I am tempted to believe it. However, I could not love my husband more, if he were a poet or a musician."

Casimir was now free to devote his time exclusively to hunting. Unfortunately the country around Berry offered less exhilarating sport than the great forests on his father's Gascon estate. Decidedly, Nohant was not gay. For society he had to be content with a rollicking, tippling barrister from La Châtre, named Alexis Duteil, and Aurore's natural brother Hippolyte. This genial youth had felt justified by a legacy from Mme. Dupin in abandoning the military career in which the influence of the powerful Villeneuves had at first promised him success, and had accepted Aurore's invitation to make his home at Nohant. She liked " Polyte " immensely, and so did Casimir. He laughed, sang, smoked and drank all day, and his unfailing good nature kept her lord amused, and was a buffer against an inconvenient tendency to grouchiness on his part. Duteil, too, was amazingly good company when he was not drunk. His face was badly pock-marked, but his *esprit* redeemed any external blemishes, and kept the dullest company in peals of laughter, while the gaiety of his songs put melancholy to flight. Although he was married he was unfortunately not proof against the *beaux yeux* of Mme. Dudevant, but she succeeded in keeping their relations perfectly discreet, and rewarded him with the pet name of Boutarin, in homage to his merry quips. The humour in the late Mme. Dupin's *salle-à-manger* after a day of hunting and several rounds of drinks was broader than that admirable lady would have enjoyed, and Aurore was often glad to take refuge in her dear grandmother's boudoir to escape it. Casimir's jokes lacked even the saving grace of wit. " My dear Casimir, how dull you are ! " Aurore murmured, one night at dinner. " Nevertheless I love you just the same." But she was driven to revise once more her views on married *tête-à-tête*. " It is impossible to find two identical natures," she concluded. There must be in every union one who sacrifices to the other. But what an inexhaustible source of happiness to yield to one whom one loves ! What a sacrifice to God and to conjugal love at the same time ! Thus did this young Romanticist struggle to adjust her ideals to the sordid realities of life.

When Deschartres' term of stewardship ended, Casimir found additional distraction in the management of the property.

He worked strenuously and with a good-will by the side of the peasants in the fields, " sweating blood and water " in his zeal. He made improvements, cutting down dying trees for firewood, and clearing away the shrubbery where Aurore had once built a secret altar to Corambé. He got rid of the bedraggled peacocks, and the superannuated horses, and mangey old dogs. He was proud of his work, for the place looked much tidier. Mme. Dudevant was dumb before these assaults on the dear associations of her childhood. She sacrificed to conjugal love and God her impulse to protest with tears, and Casimir continued to be, on paper, " mon ange et mon cher amour," but she began to be conscious of gaps in her soul that even her little son Maurice, whose arrival she had hailed as the most beautiful moment of her life, could not fill.

It is not to be supposed that the temperamental peculiarities of a Romantic Mystic in whose veins the blood of princes mingled with that of the proletariat were easily fathomed by a plain, prosaic gentleman-farmer. One of her admirers, puzzled by her mysterious contradictions, once told her that he could not make her out. When she seemed to be listening attentively to an abstruse conversation, she feigned not to have heard it, if questioned as to her opinion of it. She would throw away her book and jump rope, if caught in the perusal of serious literature. She sang charmingly, if she thought no one was listening, but was nervous and wooden, when asked to sing for others, and if it was noticed that she shed tears at a play, protested that her emotion was due to the absurdity of the hero's wig. What was he to think of her? That she was a sensible and superior young woman or a giddy-headed romp?

To which she responded : " I am all that you are pleased to think me ! "

It will easily be seen that poor Casimir was bewildered by the erratic and contradictory moods of his lady, and as he was always irritable when he did not understand things, under a not uncommon delusion that he was being made fun of, his disposition did not mellow with time. Ill-temper began to inscribe little tell-tale lines on his rather flat, flabby countenance, that had been so smooth and promising in the days when

they had ices at Tortoni's, and certain ugly curves appeared at the corners of his lips and nostrils, suspiciously like a sneer. His ill-humour was publicly manifested one day while visiting the dear Duplessis friends at the home where he had once so much enjoyed playing games with the young people in the days of his courtship. Aurore's boisterous spirits and excited outbursts when romping with the five little Duplessis girls and their friends and her fondness for practical jokes now seemed to him unbecoming in a wife and a mother. He expressed his sentiments firmly and strongly, but unavailingly. It was perhaps not unreasonable that he should disapprove of her throwing gravel at the head of their host while taking coffee on the terrace, particularly as some of it fell in his own cup, but to seize her by the collar and box her ears was certainly unworthy of a husband and a father. Aurore began to suspect that there were limits beyond which sacrifice to God and conjugal love was not justified.

She returned to Nohant with a passive exterior, but an internal ferment and rebellion which soon affected her liver and produced those feminine symptoms of " vapors," faintness and low spirits, always so mystifying to mere man. One morning at the breakfast table she astonished Casimir by bursting into tears. Being neither a philosopher nor a poet, he was at a loss to account for it, but in his clumsy way he tried to cheer her up. The treasury was low just then, but he heroically dipped into their principal, and bought her a piano. Aurore was touched, but having no one who enjoyed listening to her music, she left her new piano closed.

At this juncture Fate stepped in and brought her old schoolmates, the Bazouins, Jane and Aimée, to visit Nohant. They were serene, well-bred young ladies, whose devotion to an indulgent and gouty father had thus far interfered with their being matrimonially settled. Noticing that the one-time Queen of the Convent was not in her usual good form, they persuaded Casimir to bring her to Cauterets, in the Pyrenees, where they were going with their father for the cure.

So, on Aurore's twenty-first birthday the Dudevants set forth for Bordeaux, taking with them little Maurice, now a year old, and his nurse, a groom, and their horses. Dudevant

was in his habitual bad temper, and Aurore was struggling with her tears while she tried to look at the scenery.

* * * * *

The big, ugly hotel at Cauterets was filled with uninteresting and fashionable people, who passed their days in exchanging news of their livers and joints. Casimir found eagles and chamois to hunt and was out from daylight till dark, returning late at night to eat an enormous supper and fall asleep at once. Meanwhile Aurore moped and meditated on the disillusions of the marriage state. " In perfect love," she wrote in her journal, " the husband would not invent continual excuses for absence. If forced to be away, his return would be full of tenderness." Actual experience did not attain this standard, and the inevitable conclusion was : " Marriage is fine for lovers, and useful for saints." She resolved to be a saint.

This noble resolve was soon put to the test. Among the visitors at Cauterets, Aurore had discovered one congenial spirit, a young woman from Bordeaux named Zoé Leroy. This new friend was the perfect type of the *confidante*, so necessary to a young wife who had arrived at the *impasse* where Mme. Dudevant now found herself ; abounding in sympathy, revelling in intrigue, and withal gay and unconventional. Too gay, in fact, for the tastes of the Bazouins, Jane and Aimée ; and they drew icily aloof. In the company of the lively Zoé was her fiancé, and also another friend, a rising young barrister of twenty-six, who bore the name of his distinguished grandfather, Aurélien de Sèze, the defender of Louis XVI. M. de Sèze was at Cauterets on a tender and delicate errand, in the interests of his proposed marriage to a beautiful young lady who was stopping there with her parents. While Jane and Aimée Bazouin demurely accompanied their father every day to the Springs, in dainty and faultless costumes, or lay perspiring in layers of blankets after the baths, Aurore cantered off with her more venturesome companions on long excursions in the Pyrenees. On horseback one is born again, she discovered, and drinks life anew. She was amazed at the exhilaration of her spirits, at her own daring. No path was too steep, no precipice too giddy, to daunt her when she was in the society of these new friends. She returned to the hotel,

eyes shining, hair flying, clothes wet and muddy. The Bazouins were shocked at her behaviour, and at these long expeditions without her husband. Even Dudevant was disturbed. He reproved her for "singularising" herself. Aurore attributed her exuberance to the intoxicating quality of the mountain air, and continued to singularise.

Very soon these excursions ceased to include the young lady whom M. Aurélien de Sèze was preparing to espouse. Four made a more convenient party, and when reminded of his duty toward his fiancée, M. de Sèze confessed to Mme. Dudevant that he had discovered too late that beauty without *esprit* could not hold his affections.

At first Aurore had thought this young man too coldly ambitious to suit her taste. She thought she detected in him some of the haughty traditions of the old French magistracy. His wit, too, was flippant and ironical. "What is virtue?" he argued lightly, as they rode side by side on the romantic trail to Luz; "merely a social convention—a prejudice!" Aurore was shocked at this levity. She was accustomed to accept the overthrow of traditions when necessary, but seriously, and not unless she was prepared to put their substitutes into practice. She decided she could never like this character.

But afterwards, when they paused to admire the magnificence of the mountain pass, the fantastic peaks, the cataracts and caverns and precipices below them—"like Dante's *Inferno*," she exclaimed,—Aurélien de Sèze revised his cynical remark and Aurore modified her opinion of his character. He thought as she did, it appeared, and had only been jesting before. He had a jest on his lips for the world, but he kept the more intimate and sincere language of the heart for the One who understands.

The need to confide to a sympathetic soul one's sentiments in regard to the vastness and mystery of the universe is what brought together such primeval couples as Adam and Eve. M. de Sèze and Mme. Dudevant were drifting toward precipices much more perilous than those that yawned beneath the awful passes of the Pyrenees.

On the shores of the Lac de Gaube, he first uttered the word

Love. Aurore virtuously declined to listen. Then he sulked and avoided her for three days, and after three sleepless nights she deserted her pedestal and insisted, against her husband's command, on joining a dangerous horseback excursion to Gavenne, where she hoped for an opportunity to see Aurélien alone. She must explain and justify her position.

The explanation, which took place in a cave resembling the grotto of Apollo at Versailles, on a cyclopean scale, was convincing and satisfactory. The interview ended in an avowal of ardent love on both sides. Aurélien was made to see that theirs could be no common, vulgar *liaison*. The passions, well directed, are the source of all noble thoughts and beautiful actions, according to the romantic creed, and their passion would be well directed. It would be not *amour*, but *amitié;* they would love with their pure young hearts, their long, affectionate regards, only. "Repulse me, if I forget my promises; resist me!" entreated Aurélien, whose cautious legal mind was enchanted with his exalted *rôle*. At Bagnères, at St. Sauveur, at Lourdes, there were further explanations and vows of Platonic affection. In the rapture of their virtuous intentions Aurélien seized Aurore in a long, tender embrace. Her head dropped on his shoulder and she did not hasten to repulse him; but Dudevant inconveniently appeared.

In the silent watches of the nights that followed, Aurore reflected on the power that rests in unjust worldly conventions, which, after Divine Providence has united kindred souls, are able to foil the admirable laws that Nature has established.

Soon after the air was full of sighs and adieux, as Casimir bore his romantic young wife off to his father's home, which was near Nérac.

The Château de Guillery was spacious and modern in architecture. It had the air of a Paris *pavillon de thé*, set down in the heart of the great forest of pines and oaks, gray with lichens, and cork-trees whose trunks were bleeding from crimson scars. It was a bleak, draughty place, and the winter which Mme. Dudevant passed there was a severe one. The Garonne overflowed, wolves howled around the house at night, and wild bands of Catalans, with their goats, wandered through the forests seeking shelter under the great trees. The chief enter-

tainment at Guillery was hunting wolves and wild boars. All the neighbourhood joined, and the days of sport ended with Pantagruelian banquets, when everyone drank enormously and consumed incredible quantities of fatted poultry and truffles, game, and huge hams. Then the house echoed with snores, and Aurore, wrapped in a warm dressing-gown, filled reams of paper with closely written protestations, lamentations, confidences and admonishments, to be transmitted to Aurélien through the good offices of the sympathetic Zoé. Unfortunately she was not always careful to lock up this journal in a place where it would be safe from Casimir's investigations.

Among the things she confided to Aurélien was her dismay at the forbearance of Casimir. He was not endowed by nature for the *rôle* of deceived husband. There had been no transports of rage, no reproaches, no scenes. He merely treated her like a silly child and assumed himself all the blame for not having properly protected such an innocent young thing. He assured her of his resolution to reform his fault-finding disposition, and to try in the future to make her happier. To prove his sincerity, he procured a copy of Pascal's *Pensées* and tried to read it. The introduction promised well, and he regretted, he said, that he had not undertaken it before, for it was plainly elevating to the soul and a discipline in the art of thinking. While poor Casimir was struggling to live up to his wife, she was watching for the opportunity he never gave her to explain to him the important distinction, so clear to Aurélien and herself, between *amitié* and *amour*, though she was not entirely sure which of these emotions she really felt for Aurélien and which for her husband. Aurélien, too, who was just starting on a brilliant legal career, and was naturally anxious to play safe, repeatedly urged her to satisfy Casimir as to the purity and ideal nature of their love, and filled his letters with expressions of admiration for Casimir's character and gifts. He was no ordinary man, he assured her. He was sagacious and could teach them how to conduct themselves in their difficult position. Never had Aurélien met a heart more delicate and noble than his. We will repair our fault, he vowed remorsefully. If it was possible to restore this wronged husband to his former trustful, blissful light-

heartedness, they would do so by their united, unselfish efforts. The sweet and pure *amitié* that Aurore would bestow on her suppressed lover could not possibly give Casimir pain, for she would surround him with every care and affection. "Show him my letters," he pleaded.

It was really a pity that Aurore did not show these letters to Casimir. He could not have failed to be touched and flattered by such humble admiration and trust. But she was still worried lest her own uncertainties of heart cloud the exposition of *amitié* when attempting to present it to a person so devoid of temperament and vision as her husband. She preferred to adopt her own way of explaining the situation in eighteen closely written pages of autobiography, tracing her sentimental history from the cradle to the grave, and adding an epilogue about the resurrection of her heart under the magic touch of Aurélien de Sèze. The narrative of this closing episode was slightly softened and the whole was pervaded by an affectionate appreciation of the noble disinterestedness of her husband's character and an humble admission of her own mistakes. She ended by outlining a *modus vivendi* by the terms of which (1) Casimir was to completely trust Aurélien; (2) she was to be permitted to write Aurélien one letter a month, subject to Casimir's inspection; (3) she was to be allowed to continue her intimacy with Zoé (who was incriminated), and (4) she and Casimir were to return either to Paris, in which event they would endeavour to cultivate mutual regard by studying some language together,—or to Nohant, in which case she was to be permitted, with the same objective, to read to him her favourite books from her grandmother's library, agreeing in return, to play the piano only when he was out.

In the spring the old Baron Dudevant died, and Casimir and Aurore left Guillery and returned to Nohant. In the opinion of their friends their union was again complete and peaceful. The journal to Aurélien rolled on its voluminous length. He remained in the triangle and they met occasionally for brief interviews, at Nohant, at Bordeaux, both with and without the sanction of Casimir. But Aurore had suspected from the first that the passions of a virile young man could not subsist indefinitely on the heart only of the woman he

loved. There were signs that Aurélien's affection had passed the zenith and was beginning to decline. He wearied of superhuman aspirations and subtle analyses as substitutes for more intimate and direct expressions of their smothered emotions. His letters grew fewer and shorter. The divergencies in their religious and political views widened, and Aurore discovered that her lover's opinions were based on outworn principles, centuries old, and that his was a narrow and traditional mind.

Their mystic union had endured three years when its inevitable rupture was hastened by a revelation which both shocked Aurélien's principles and hurt his *amour-propre*. Arriving unexpectedly at Nohant, he found Aurore sewing on little garments for an expected infant. He felt that she had pushed their ideal of wifely submission too far. His own noble *rôle* melted into absurdity before this evidence of its quite too literal application. Clearly, Mme. Dudevant's conception of what they owed to Casimir was exaggerated.

Aurore held that it was ignoble to struggle for the possession of a soul. Yet she could not close this pretty romance, which had sustained her so long, completely and at once. After the birth of her little daughter Solange, she made several journeys to Bordeaux before she could admit to herself that it had collapsed. Then she brought her widowed heart back to Nohant, to the silence of the wide fields and the lonely marshes where the frogs called to each other mournfully in the cold moonlight. She locked herself in the little study that used to be her grandmother's boudoir, with her two sleeping babies breathing softly in the adjoining room ; shut out the sounds of revelry which proclaimed that Casimir and Hippolyte were amusing themselves in their usual genial fashion, and stared at the idle pen and blank sheets that would never again convey her thoughts to the faithless Aurélien. As she opened the casement to look out on the garden, so quiet and white under the tall black trees, the crushed shell of a dead cricket fell from the sill. This little cricket had lived in her desk and chirped to her through the happy nights when she was pouring out her soul to Aurélien. Its death was the symbol of the fate of her romance. She wrapped it reverently in a Datura blossom and laid it away in a box as a souvenir of *amitié*.

CHAPTER III

CARNAVAL ROMANTIQUE

" . . . *Dans une sorte de camaradérie héroïque, serrés les uns contre les autres, partants en guerre pour la conquête des libertés littéraires. Ils ont des sabres ; ils deviennent le rois du pavé de Paris. Ils vont jouer de leurs guitares à Naples et à Venise.*"

Théophile Gautier.[1]

PARIS in the eighteen-thirties ! Lost Paradise of Youth and Vision ! Théophile Gautier, a middle-aged survivor of its departed splendour in a sombre age when fame must be " won by the sweat of the brow," saluted it wistfully, in retrospect, as from a land of exile. " Thirty years separate us from it, but the enchantment still endures." Bliss was it in those days to be alive, but to be young was indispensable. In the literature of that Romantic era, no one ever was over twenty-five. Beyond this limit, all chance of an interesting career was over. " Je suis le poète de la jeunesse, je veux m'en aller avec le Printemps." Failing that premature departure, and obliged to cross the threshold of senility on one's thirtieth birthday, nothing remained but to wrap a shroud about one's feeble decaying intellect, and take leave of youth and ideals together, like Jules Sandeau, in a funeral banquet attended by sympathetic friends. Even in the literature of Romanticism, no one of any importance was over thirty.

But for *La Jeunesse*, while it lasted, a boundless horizon opened. After having witnessed a monarchy peaceably overthrown and a magnificently tolerant new government established, all within the compass of three magic days, nothing, whether in poetry or art or manners, seemed impossible, or extraordinary. The arrogant army of youth, in all the inde-

[1] " . . . In a sort of heroic fraternity, pressed against each other, setting forth to war for the conquest of literary freedom. They have sabres ; they have become kings of the Paris pavements. They go to play their guitars in Naples and in Venice."—THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

cency of long hair and terrifying beards (previous to 1830 there were, it is said, only two beards in France, Devéria's and Borel's), with the corners of their Spanish capes thrown over one shoulder, or with Byronic collars that bared their ardent breasts to the divine afflatus,—flocked up the broad highway of Individualism, at the end of which the colossal Victor Hugo stood on his pedestal, his monumental brow crowned with laurels, in his hand the preface to *Cromwell*, the Bible of 1830.

In those days of ferment, every variety of idea had its chance and received a trial. Utopias sprang up everywhere : Fourièrism, with its pleasant justification of the free expression of the passions ; St. Simonism, expanding its systems of industrial reconstruction into exuberant theories of community of goods and of women ; new styles of novels, clubs, journals, fresh fads and fashions, were born daily and found supporters. No sacrifice was too great for the ideals of 1830 ; that was the day of the genuine *vie de Bohème*. To climb five flights to a dingy, icy attic ; to boast a threadbare coat and an empty stomach while you jingled in your tattered pocket the price of a *Première* at the Odéon or the Porte St. Martin, was to be one of the kings of the Quartier Latin. Extravagances in speech, dress and manners, was the goal of these Illuminati. Emotions must be wrought to the highest pitch. Expression outstripped thought. It was not enough to admire, enjoy, censure ; one must swoon, shudder, magnify, exalt. The outer man must be symbolic of the inner emotion. On the opening night of *Marion Delorme* crowds of Hugo's worshippers, disguised as brigands or cavaliers, in sombreros, cloaks, crimson satin waistcoats, apple-green trousers, stood for hours in the street awaiting the opening of the theatre, patiently enduring the contumely of a jeering, mud-throwing populace. Balzac wandered about the Luxembourg at midnight, in a flamboyant dressing-gown, bearing a lighted candle in a *repoussé* candlestick. Mérimée ate ices with his friends on the roof of Nôtre Dame.

Men fought, bled and died for three days over the shattered conventions of a verse like " *Est-il minuit ? Minuit bientôt* " ; and in the mania for singularity young poets became the slaves

of the suppressed cæsura and the *vers enjambé*. The barriers of moral conventions went down at the same time with the æsthetic standards, and the New Literature that teemed with bizarre and stunning epithets—" plays of thirty acts, and verses of forty feet "—begat monstrous themes and sensational *dénouements ;* adultery, incest, the passion of a soldier for a tigress, of an artist for an eunuch. The preface of *Cromwell* had crowned the trivial and grotesque ; there remained nothing unclean and disreputable under the sun, " except respectability." The poet, emancipated from academic and moral standards, proclaimed himself the high-priest of the Almighty, and ally of the Creator of the Universe. Thus his decrees were without appeal and could make no concession to the blue pencil of an editor or the mutterings of an academician.

The gods of the earlier Romanticism meekly folded their tents and departed into the dusk of the eighteenth century. René, a dethroned idol, heard the vast army of La Jeunesse sweep by, as he sat thinking delicate thoughts beside the chaste couch of that faded belle, Mme. Récamier, in the quiet shades of the Abbaye-aux-Bois. The merciless clock of the Age had struck long ago for him. He was already *passé* for the impetuous vandalism of 1830.

And what a lusty army of young ghosts rises up to-day to the roll call of the class of 1830 ! All united in that close and admiring fraternity of militant idealism that knew not jealousy, nor envy. Hugo, the Master, in whose presence awe-struck youths felt their knees give way under them, wins the great battle of " Hernani," and shapes the future of French verse within the sacred circle of the Cenacle. Alfred de Musset, " beau cygne errant," singing while he weeps, publishes his first verses at nineteen and dots the " i " of singularity in the " Ballade à la Lune." Sainte-Beuve, the cool and discreet, forgets the *juste milieu* for the moment, and plunges into the fray with the scandalous " Rayons Jaunes " of *Joseph Delorme*. Prosper Mérimée reduces humanity to a puppet of the passions, and mingles its basest instincts with the loftiest aspirations. Balzac makes microscopic studies of the human comedy on the chart of the universe. Delacroix, savage maniac, covers huge

canvasses with the contortions of mediæval and romantic heroes, painting with a " drunken broom," that drips with ruby and chrysoprase, two canvases a year for the jury of the Institut to turn down. Berlioz—" inspired fool "—translates the passionate colours of Delacroix's palate into the rich, sonorous orchestration of the " Marche Funèbre " and the " Symphonie Fantastique." The mystical young Liszt turns his back on Rossini to worship at the deserted throne of Beethoven, and sits at the feet of the St. Simoniens when the Père Enfantin applies the religion of fraternity to art. The excommunicated Abbé Lamennais hurls the " Livre du Peuple " in the face of the Holy Father's injunction. Pierre Leroux, child of the proletariate, preaches a new gospel of universal religion in his " Book of Humanity."

" The amorous fever that reddens their lips forbids even the journals to be banal." Delatouche and Buloz are in labour ; *Figaro* and *La Revue des Deux Mondes* are brought forth.

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In every little town of the provinces, however dull and banal, a dozen or so strong young souls were listening in for a phrase of the inspired message. They met informally to share such new books as they could obtain and to discuss the reviews of the latest plays. Even the quiet backwaters of La Châtre were touched by the regenerating tide. Mme. Dudevant, about whose seductive personality and melancholy eyes the romantic young gentlemen of Berry fluttered devotedly, tugged uneasily at her moorings.

Under the emotional stimulus of her *roman manqué* with Aurélien de Sèze and her determination not to be bound down to a commonplace husband who was developing a weakness for strong drink, profanity and servant girls, Aurore at twenty-six had blossomed into an extraordinary and enigmatic personality. Beneath a calm, repressed exterior, she but half concealed an ardent, voluptuous imagination and a passionate temperament, which upset every male specimen, of whatever age or status, who approached her. Her frankness and simplicity made her doubly dangerous. The wives and sweethearts of La Châtre were in a fever of jealous apprehension whenever their menfolk

set out in the direction of Nohant. If they were very young, and many of them were but lads, they succumbed at once, and sat about her adoringly, eager for service, confidences or lectures. If they belonged to the clergy or were pledged elsewhere, they repressed warmer emotions under the cloak of fraternal affection. For the most part they were simple country youths, without culture or polish, but honest and enthusiastic. Charles Duvernet, gentle and melancholy, who played duets with her, and the gigantic blond Alphonse Fleury (" the Gaulois," she called him) with his huge paws, his Dantesque nose and fierce beard, were sons of old friends of her father, and she had played with them when they wore skirts and ran about the muddy roads in sabots. Others were later acquaintances like the serene, good-tempered Planet, who was interested in socialism, and Jules Néraud (" the Malgache " she called him—for Aurore had special nicknames for all her favourites), a little dried-up copper-coloured naturalist, with whom she studied botany and butterflies, tramping with him over the fields, her baby on her back, to find specimens for her herbarium. Beautiful upon the mountains were the feet of a group of students, in medicine and law, returning for vacations with news for the young Berrichon romanticists of the dawn of a new day in Paris. Among these were Gustave Papet—" cher Papiche "—who lived in an old château of Diane de Poictiers, near Nohant, and Jules Sandeau, his college friend, a fair-haired cherub, son of a tax-collector at Bourges, " light as a humming-bird and innocent as a little St. John," with deep-set orbs and his head tilted sentimentally on one side. If Jules was the object of special favours from the *Lys de la Vallée* —tender rendezvous on a certain bench in the shrubbery or under a certain tree on the way to Coupérie—they were all her " good fellows," and each had his own place in the comfortable *sans-gène* of the big salon at Nohant. They were banded together for the conquest of Liberty and they made common cause against the stupid traditionalism of society, and by putting their personal troubles together they bore them better and beautifully consoled each other.

All were worshippers of the great Victor, whom they read, discussed and parodied with the disrespectful freedom of the

very young, and in token of their allegiance they signed their names :—

Aurore Dudevant, Hugolâtre !
Jules Sandeau, Hugolâtre ! !
Alphonse Fleury, Hugolâtre ! ! !

So it was written in the book of Destiny that one December day when Sandeau and Fleury and Papet had returned to Paris, Aurore should surprise Casimir by the announcement that she was going too, and a request for a modest allowance. Putting in her valise sundry little painted glove-boxes and snuff-boxes, by whose sale she vaguely hoped to eke out her modest allowance (for the financial situation of the Dudevants was becoming daily more complicated and Casimir was naturally not disposed to overdo his generosity), she set off for the Promised Land in the Châteauroux diligence. One more bait for Fortune, which she said very little about, was the manuscript of a very crude novel called *Aimée*, which Hippolyte's wife, to whom she had read it, praised warmly. But both the novel and the *objets d'art* were a side issue. Aurore was going to Paris, not because she was tired of matrimony or felt the urge of literary genius, or because she was a prophet of any social *isms*, or interested in the emancipation of her sex ; she was going to Paris to save her own personality, and because Jules Sandeau and the rest of the " bunch " (but especially Jules Sandeau) were there.

Let no one cast a stone at this evasion of motherly duties ! Aurore adored her children—" my little loves " : Maurice, aged six, tall, slender, with his mother's great eyes and oval, olive face ; and Solange, aged two and a half, fat, blond, and naughty. On the eve of her Great Adventure she wrote to a thoughtful and serious young man named Jules Boucoiran, begging him to take her place with her children during her absence, and no better testimony need be offered to the devotion she inspired in her admirers than the alacrity with which this self-sacrificing youth abandoned a lucrative position as tutor to the children of General Bertrand in Paris, to bury himself in the snow-drifts of Nohant with only the slenderest prospects as to salary. M. Boucoiran, who was twenty, and the virtuous son of a widow at Nîmes, was especially well-

fitted for the task. He had already passed some months at Nohant as Maurice's tutor and, as an inmate of the family, had witnessed the constant and painful friction of the Dudevant temperaments, and had entered sympathetically into the situation—perhaps a trifle too sympathetically, since the warmth of his interest in the châtelaine had made him *persona non grata* with Casimir. In the absence of the lady, however, Casimir's irritation might be counted on to subside, and Boucoiran was admirably suited to the *rôle* of watch-dog and factotum. He could be relied upon not only to direct Maurice in his studies and Solange in her morals, but could fill at need the office of nurse and doctor. " If Solange has an attack of croup in the night," wrote Mme. Dudevant, " give her milk of almonds. Put a few drops of orange flower in it and a half-ounce of syrup of gum. You have such a knack at these things ! "

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There were no signs or portents in the wintry Paris skies to herald the advent of a genius on that grey December dawn, in 1830, when Aurore, stiff and numb after a sleepless night in the Châteauroux-Paris diligence with a sack of truffled turkeys for a pillow, descended in the coachyard of La Boulie. Jules Sandeau, accompanied by one of his friends, was there to meet her, with fraternal handshakes. A light-hearted group of *gamins* on a lark, was all that the casual observer would have remarked. They betook themselves at once to Hippolyte's empty apartment on the rue de Seine, which he had rather grudgingly consented to loan. " You'll soon be back home again," he had prophesied. Aurore, washed, warmed and fed, despatched a friendly letter to Casimir, reminding him to forward her new hat and a lamp, and was ready for the Larks.

Almost the first step of freedom was the discarding of her feminine trappings, symbol of outworn conventions, which she proposed to disregard when convenient. Her new outfit recalled the glorious liberty of her girlhood, when she galloped over the fields and cart-ruts of Berry in her comfortable riding breeches. A thick, long overcoat, half concealing the trousers, a tall grey hat, tilted jauntily over her curls, a bright scarf knotted carelessly around her neck, with its long ends floating

in the wind, a cigarette between her full red lips, she trudged manfully through the muddy streets in her thick little boots, arm in arm with the bawling Planet, and the effervescent Fleury, the prettiest young gentleman who ever looked at life through the wide curious eyes of youth. " To each of us his clothes, to each of us his liberty ! " Casimir at Nohant was doing as he pleased, having mistresses or not, according to his desires, drinking wine or water, according to his thirst, saving or spending, building, planting, buying, as he wanted. That was all right. All she asked was the same privilege. To rise at noon ; to save money by forgetting to eat while spell-bound before Vernet's Judith at the Luxembourg ; to go home by the Champs Elysées or the Invalides, as fancy dictated ; to warm herself in a cathedral and to shuffle into the cheap parquet seats (where ladies were not admitted) when Malibran played Othello, in the middle of a merry bunch of athletic young protectors, and to dine uproariously afterwards at Pinson's, at the expense of Papet, their Mæcenas ; to loiter on the bridges in the moonlight ; to shout joyously to the passers-by, to push hilariously through the foolish crowds, and to laugh boisterously at nothing because you were overflowing with life and the sense of well-being ; and then to go to bed when other people were getting up ; no one to say, " there goes Mme. Dudevant, I wonder what crazy thing she is up to now " ; no longer a woman (not even a man), just an atom in the vast crowd of humanity ; this it was to be free, this it was to express yourself ! How good it was to be alive, in spite of disappointments, Aurélien, husbands, debts and gossip ! And to love, and be loved, unreservedly, on the impulse ; to expend all that excess of passion and vitality, so long repressed, in doing the maddest things, without ever asking why she did it, just because she wished to ! The dykes had broken and the waters were rising ; there was no turning back now.

CHAPTER IV

THE DAUGHTER OF THE LYRE

"Je suis la fille de la lyre, et je ne vous connais pas. Il y a long-temps que vous me faites souffrir en me condamnant à des travaux d'esprit qui sont contraires à mes facultés. Mais vos grands raisonnements ne sont pas faits pour moi. Le temps de vivre est venu ; je suis un être libre ; je veux vivre libre ; adieu !"

Les Sept Cordes de la Lyre.[1]

Not long before Mme. Dudevant fled from the quiet Berry country side to plunge into this romantic ferment, a moribund journal called *Figaro* had been purchased by one of her Berrichon compatriots, M. Henri Delatouche, who was trying to put life into it by writing most of the columns himself, and teaching his assistants to fill the rest in accordance with his own views and literary standards. Although M. Delatouche had the soul of an artist and the fine, delicate instincts of a keen critic, his own novels and plays had not met with great success. This had made him rather severe on the literary style of the young generation, and out of sympathy with some of their enthusiasms. In an article entitled "Camaradérie Littéraire," he ridiculed the self-adulation and self-advertising methods of Hugo's famous Cenacle, which incidentally, he had not been invited to join. This assembly of eccentric rimers, he said, had developed into a sort of Mutual Insurance Company, in which the poets "fraternised with the musicians, the musicians with the painters, the painters with the sculptors, and all sang each others praises on the guitar." A powerfully-built young man named Gustave Planche, who had started life as a student of chemistry and had "bifurcated" into literature, had pushed his superb Raphaelesque profile and impudent, determined

[1] "I am the daughter of the lyre, and I know you not. For a long time you have made me suffer by condemning me to studies that are unsuited to my talents. But your fine words and your splendid theories are not for me. The time has come for me to live ; I am a free being ; I wish to live in liberty ; farewell !"—*The Seven Strings of the Lyre.*

chin into the heart of the Cenacle before they fairly knew who he was, and astonished the reserved and fastidious Alfred de Vigny and the great Hugo himself, by calling them all by their first names. He atoned for his premature familiarity, however, by coming to their rescue in a stinging reply to Delatouche's attack, entitled " Haines Littéraires," which maliciously recalled some of that gentleman's literary failures. The valiant Planche forestalled a reprisal by immediately calling at the office of *Figaro* and impudently inquiring whether its editor preferred to " have it before or after *déjeuner !* " Delatouche was entirely able to retaliate in Planche's own coin, and Paris re-echoed with the battle of the critics for six months. Both *Figaro* and M. Planche were firmly established in the limelight thereby, and the journalistic venture of M. Delatouche promised to succeed.

Mme. Dudevant had received a letter of introduction to this " literary hater " from his cousin, the mother of Charles Duvernet. But on first meeting she thought him " antipathetic," and hesitated to deliver herself at once into the paws of so autocratic a patron. Under the social demands of *la vie parisienne*, however, her modest allowance was shrinking alarmingly and required an instant subsidy. This relief, she discovered, was not to be derived from the sale of the painted Spa-wood glove boxes and *tabatières* which had been so acceptable as gifts to her personal friends at home. Fashions in Paris are fleeting. The demand for such trifles had already passed, and the expenditure for materials exceeded the profits of any possible sales. It was plain that a means of livelihood must be found which involved no capital investment. Obviously, literature fulfilled this condition ; it offered the additional advantage of being in vogue just then. All her young friends were deserting the dull precincts of the classroom and laboratory to scribble in a cold attic, warmed by radiant visions and bright hopes only. Jules Sandeau, Émile Regnier, Félix Pyat, Planet, all were " going in " for literature, and even the gentle Charles Duvernet, making a brief visit to his friends in Paris, caught the germ. Aurore fingered pensively the sheets of the novel she had brought from Nohant, which her sister-in-law had commended, and regretted that she had not devoted

more time at the convent to the study of spelling and rhetoric and less to religion. But when she reflected on the imaginative life she had lived secretly among the creations of her own fancy, she realised that she had been carrying novels in her head all her life, and that the startling and romantic adventures of that mystic virtuoso, Corambé, which had never been interrupted by the prosaic duties of a wife and mother, might now be turned to practical account. If romanticism was the theme of the hour, there was no one who could contribute more richly to that intriguing topic, on which she had meditated ever since she sat beside her grandmother in front of the hearth and hypnotised herself by the magic pictures she saw through a hole in the fire-screen. It was only a question of learning to put it all on paper.

Another possible patron in Paris was her old friend, " Papa " Duris-Dufresne, Republican deputy from the department of the Indre, whom she and Casimir had helped to elect on the fusion ticket just before the expulsion of the Royalists. She called on this typical old-school Republican in wig and earrings, and begged for an introduction to his colleague, the Comte de Kératry, who, in the intervals of saving his country, was amusing himself by writing " modern " novels, in which revolting themes were made palatable by a sprinkling of romanticism. M. Duris-Dufresne, who had already fallen under the spell of Mme. Dudevant's *beaux yeux*, like all the rest of his sex, during the political campaign at La Châtre, was flattered to be asked for a favour. He not only gave the letter to Kératry and hinted at an introduction to Lafayette, but offered a great deal of advice, applicable to Youth and Beauty exposed to the perils of Paris profligacy, and especially warned against the seductions of Delatouche, who had a reputation for a dangerous fellow with the ladies. Aurore smiled sadly at this ; her own heart was placed elsewhere—permanently, she believed—and the elderly and imperious Delatouche stood little chance when it was a question of the sunny curls and deep innocent eyes of the engaging little Jules Sandeau.

A rendezvous was arranged for eight in the morning, at Kératry's house. This demanded courage and resolution on the part of a young woman who suffered constitutionally from

timidity with strangers, and from a deep-rooted aversion to early rising. That she arrived there and on the dot, proved the earnestness of her desire for the literary life. The Comte de Kératry received her affably, but sleepily, in what seemed to her a very luxurious and gallant room for such an aged and respectable looking gentleman. In a nest of pillows, laces and ribbons, on a very chic *chaise-longue*, a pretty doll-faced young woman was extended, whose presence at a serious business interview was inappropriate and embarrassing.

" Is your daughter still asleep ? " Aurore inquired politely, unpleasantly aware of her muddy boots.

A bad beginning ; the lady was his wife !

" Ah, perhaps she is ill. In that case I will not disturb her," said Aurore, preparing to retire from the disdainful beauty.

" Oh, not at all, not at all," expostulated Kératry, pursuing her retreating form down the stairs ; " but I can tell you now, in a word, my honest opinion—women ought not to try to write."

" If that is your theory," retorted the descending Aurore, " it was a pity to wake up your wife so early to hear it, wasn't it ? "

But Kératry continued to follow her down the stairs, fluently developing his ideas on the position of her sex ; women should keep out of literature, and beget children not books.

" Upon my word, sir, you may keep that advice for yourself, if you think it so good," Aurore flung back over her shoulder indignantly. She concluded from this experience that it is better not to see celebrities too closely, and never forgot it when she became a celebrity herself.

Slightly crestfallen over this *fiasco*, she called upon Alphonse Fleury, her " blond Gaulois giant," to protect her on a visit to the doughty Delatouche. To his strong arms she entrusted her manuscript of *Aimée*, which he declared so heavy that she should have had a mule to carry it. She presented it modestly to the editor of *Figaro*, with a request for a candid criticism. Although Delatouche, being a bit soured by the neglect of an unappreciative public, was affecting Spartan manners and principles just then, he was, as M. Duris-Dufresne had hinted, an admirer of the fair sex, and was known to have had fresh flowers from mysterious admirers on his desk daily. He was

one of those unlovely men, who nevertheless are pleasing to the ladies ; his voice and manners, when he wished, soft and caressing ; his face sparkling with gentle amusement. His vanity was excited by the prospect of playing the impresario for the *début* of the original and fascinating young Mme. Dudevant, whose local reputation had preceded her. He received the manuscript of *Aimée* graciously, but not too optimistically.

" You may as well understand from the start that there is no money in literature," he warned her. " After twenty-five years that I have been at it, I don't make more than fifteen hundred francs a year."

This sum, plus her allowance, sounded magnificent to Aurore, who had not yet learned that one's needs always succeed in keeping ahead of one's income.

The question thus simplified, Delatouche agreed to read her novel. The next day he told her that it was charming but unfortunately lacked commonsense. She was too ignorant of life to try to depict it in a novel.

" That is true," she admitted. " Three-quarters of my life has been spent in dreams."

" Precisely," he said. " You must start all over again."

" Quite possibly," she replied meekly.

" It must be completely rewritten."

" Enough," she agreed ; and when she reached her lodgings she incontinently committed *Aimée* to the flames.

Before one could be a writer, then, one must have seen everything, known everything, felt everything. There was, thus, a capital investment required for literature too !

While expensively acquiring this indispensable equipment, she was glad to accept an offer to write copy for *Figaro* at seven francs a day, under the direction of Delatouche. She felt it necessary to apologise to her friends at home for such a connection, but assured them that it was a means of arrival. Delatouche, however, soon saw that this engaging young person who sat at a little table beside him, in a cloud of cigarette smoke, her feet on a little piece of carpet, her elbows on her knees, and her curly head on her hand, gazing abstractedly at the fire, while his friends dropped in, lifted their eyebrows inquiringly and fell to chatting on questions of the day, would

never succeed in journalism. When she brought him, at the end of the day, what she had scribbled on the little sheets of paper he had given her in the morning with a theme to expand, he rapped her knuckles with a metaphorical ruler, and railed at her lack of *esprit*. " Take your medicine," he said. Writers, it appeared, were merely instruments, just pens, in the hands of Delatouche. Aurore chafed under this tyranny, but dutifully tried to swallow the criticisms.

Privately, Delatouche had no great faith in her success as a novelist either ; but his elderly heart warmed indulgently toward the charming woman whose sex was so little disguised under those ridiculous masculine clothes. Aurore was the *enfant gaté* of the office. If she succeeded, she was to be his own special creation, and for her he threw off his inertia and cynicism and tried once more to be young. He had a great dread of growing old. One is never fifty, he declared, one is only twice twenty-five ; yet he already appeared much older than he really was, partly owing to his very poor health and an irascible temper. Nevertheless, he was eager to still play the game of life, and entered with paternal enjoyment into the pranks of Aurore and her frisky young companions, Sandeau, and Papet, who had also committed their souls to the mill of *Figaro*. When the day's task was over, they all swaggered into the Café Conti, to observe the *clientèle* of *Figaro* with noses buried in the newspaper, seriously reading the mystifications they had helped to concoct ; and when Delatouche was in one of his genial moods, he accompanied them to Pinson's to dinner. Sometimes they dragged him around the *Quartier Latin* afterwards, in the moonlight, with a carriage hired by the hour at their heels, while they serenaded all the grocers in the Quartier ; or they wandered in and out of the deserted streets of Mont St. Geneviève, chanting lugubrious dirges. Then the next day, he became again the stern and exacting critic and they all trembled under his cutting satire.

Even before she had decided to assert her personality, Aurore had recognised in Jules Sandeau, when he came to Nohant, the germ of a nascent artist. From the beginning of their acquaintance, moreover, she had been conscious of a very special emotion as often as she saw his grey felt hat with the red band

(all the others were blue) as it lay piled with the rest on the table outside of her salon door, and knew that the little St. John was within. The desire to assist and encourage his talents had been a large factor in her determination to go to Paris. After three months of ardent wooing, Jules persuaded her to merge their tender interest in the closest form of collaboration, based on a union of hearts as well as brains. Thus the gross infidelities of Casimir were offset respectably by a relation which, according to the creed of the Romanticists, was consecrated by the purity and nobility of its intentions. There was nothing immoral in this relation; like Guinevere, she would have a good death because she had been a good lover. The immorality, had there been any, would have consisted in Aurore's continuing to yield to the embraces of a union which, however legalised, was unsanctified by the divine emotions of love. Her motto, which she wore engraved on a seal, was *Vitam Impendere Vero*—a life consecrated to truth. A great many new ideas about free love were in the air in those days, and although she had not identified herself with the sectarian advocates of such doctrines, they appealed to her impatience of any enforced ties or conventions. Also, her present status as an artist, she believed, gave her the right to complete freedom, in body as well as in mind.

The partnership with Sandeau had its beginning, very appropriately, at the hotel Jean Jacques Rousseau. This hotel has acquired a greater fame from having been that in which Lucien Rubempré, the hero of Balzac's *Illusions Perdues*, stopped when he came to Paris in search of fortune, than from having been the scene of the amours of Jules Sandeau and Aurore Dudevant. This is, of course, partly due to their having so soon left it for a small apartment at the top of a large house on Quai St. Michel, opposite the Pont Neuf. From their balcony they looked down on the grey walls of the Louvre, stretching along the Quais, and opposite them the slender spire of the Sainte Chapelle and the stone lions on the top of the Tour Saint Jacques cut the blue sky with their delicate silhouettes. The splendid old towers of Nôtre Dame closed the picture and put the final touch; everybody was reading Dumas' *Hunchback of Nôtre Dame* just then, and the roof and

towers of the old cathedral were Holy Ground to the Young Romanticists.

By dint of loans, credits and economies, Aurore managed to procure the simplest and most esssential furnishings for their apartment. She kept it tidy herself, and washed her own clothes; and their dinners, when they dined at home, were sent in from a neighbouring restaurant. They shared the expenses, and claimed to live on twelve sous a day. Honoré Balzac, who had not yet added the " de " to his name, knew and admired these two lovers, so proud and happy in their garret, and thought Mme. Dudevant " sublime " because she had left all in order to follow this poor young man. Sitting opposite each other at a little table, they worked late into the night to earn their daily bread, and when day broke they broke their fast, while discussing the results of their respective inspirations. The honours, however, generally rested with the lady. Sandeau was a nonchalant youth, full of beautiful sentiments, but not distinguished for his powers of diligent application, and the sheets of paper in front of which he had been sitting were often still blank when Aurore inspected them. However, he managed to produce several stories, which she gleefully described as " incredible monstrosities in the sublime manner of the *Revue de Paris*," and which revealed his ability to treat doubtful situations with delicacy and charm. They were accepted by the *Revue* or the *Mode*, with a little softening down by Aurore. The collaborators adopted the joint name of *George et Jules Sand*. " Keep our literary association secret," she wrote Dudevant; " they dress me up so cruelly at La Châtre and this would be the last straw."

Having arrived at the dignity of a contract for a novel Sandeau set out to produce a masterpiece on the favourite theme of the hour, the battle between love and law, passion and society. But an attack of influenza interfered with the completion of this task. His collaborator came to the rescue and saved his heroine from a life of vice and profligacy by the reading of *La Nouvelle Heloïse*. She also introduced several little episodes connected with nuns, convents and worldly prelates, which had a flavour of the Convent des Anglaises. Jules, the one time dandy of La Châtre, shorn by

suffering of his grace and his *chic*, lolled moodily on three chairs, wrapped in a greasy dressing-gown, his cravat under his ear, and fumed at the stupid pruderies of his collaborator's dialogues. He added his own touches to her episodes, with startling results. Aurore's mother, now ensconed in the comfortable respectability of middle age, read G. and J. Sand's new book, *Rose et Blanche*, in the suburban home of her married daughter Caroline, and was scandalised at the breadth of treatment. Being in the secret of the pen name she hastened to acquaint her decadent offspring with her own and Caroline's unfavourable impressions. Concretely, they objected to the round, soldierly oaths that proceeded from the lips of the good nun, Sister Olympe. Aurore apologised for the language and laid it at the door of her " editor." Jules, it seemed, in striving to impart sprightliness to her style, had made it farcical. She had no love for horse-play herself, and she promised that none would appear in the novel she was then writing.

Aside from the chaste Sophie Delaborde, *Rose et Blanche* excited little comment. It was rough and unequal, apparently, and smelled of the glue of collaboration. Soon after, a sad occurrence made it advisable to break the partnership altogether. Aurore, returning unexpectedly from a visit to Nohant, surprised Jules and his wash-lady, it was whispered, in relations that proved to be quite as unpardonable in a free union as when committed by Casimir within the fetters of the marriage laws. Sandeau's protestations and excuses fell on deaf ears. He was promptly turned out of doors, and while he rushed desperately off to Italy, with a stick in his hand and three hundred francs, supplied by Mme. Dudevant, in his pocket, to cool his passion and mend his heart, Émile Regnault was summoned to remove his effects from her apartment. With a severity worthy of the narrowest prejudices of bourgeois morality, Aurore shut the enchanting little St. John for ever from her heart, but she bore the scars of this first and cruellest deception of her life for a long while. The partisans of Sandeau averred that grief for Mme. Dudevant had deprived him of his last illusion and his last hair. When lunching with Balzac, who for a brief period was one of the partisans, Jules

confided to him that he took so much morphine the day after she turned him out, that his stomach had " lost all power of absorption." To console himself, he described her very appreciatively in his most successful novel, *Marianna*, some pages of which have been compared to Maria Edgeworth at her best. When the little daughter of Buloz, the editor of *La Revue des Deux Mondes* was showing him her father's photograph album one day, they came to a picture of his one-time collaborator and the child asked him who it was. " That woman, my child, is a cemetery," said Sandeau.

But the tragedies of life are not always as devastating as they threaten to be, particularly in youth. Although the shock of this *dénouement* deprived Jules, prematurely, of the greater part of his famous curls, and although under the ravages of time and sorrow, his graceful figure acquired an excessive and unromantic obesity, Aurore's expectation of literary laurels for her young friend were amply realised. After a tempestuous episode with the star of the *Comédie Française*, Marie Dorval, he changed his style and wrote charming stories of ideal family life, married happily, and was made an Academician, in which capacity he was offered (but evaded) an opportunity for revenge seldom granted to broken-hearted lovers—that of voting upon the granting of the Prize of the Académie Française to his former mistress. Thus he had an unexpectedly beautiful and honourable end to his sadly wrecked youth.

CHAPTER V

THE SACRIFICE TO LOVE

" L'amour, c'est la vertu de la femme ; c'est pour lui qu'elle se fait une gloire de ses fautes, c'est de lui qu'elle reçoit l'heroisme de braver ses remords. Plus le crime lui coûte à commettre, plus elle aura mérité de celui qu'elle aime. C'est la fanatisme qui met le poignard aux mains du religieux."

Indiana.[1]

LATE one afternoon in May, 1832, Delatouche toiled up the five flights to Mme. Dudevant's mansard on Quai St. Michel and found her in the act of inscribing his name on the title page of her first novel, *Indiana*. He snatched it from her, sniffed at it, and turned the leaves indifferently. His health was bad just then and he had become correspondingly misanthropic, shutting himself up mysteriously in his hermit's retreat at Aulney and sulking because his pupils were beginning to find their wings, and work independently. Aurore trembled at his mocking glance at her first-born and took refuge on the balcony with her flower-pots and her cigarette. Delatouche plunged into the book, and at each page emitted an impatient ejaculation.

" Why, this is nothing but an imitation (*pastiche*). School of Balzac ! *Pastiche*, what have you to do with me ? Balzac, what have you to do with me ? "

Aurore sat very still on the balcony, watching the soft wet spring clouds drift over the tower of St. Jacques, and listening to the turning of the leaves within. At last Delatouche rushed out on the balcony, book in hand, and proceeded to point out, with the aid of examples, the inexcusable imitations of the shocking and fantastic style of his ex-pupil and present *bête-noire*, Honoré Balzac, the mere mention of whose name threw him

[1] " Love is the woman's virtue ; it is for love's sake that she glories in her mistakes, it is from love that she derives the courage to face her remorse. The more it has cost her to commit the crime, the more she will have deserved from the one she loves. It is the fanaticism that puts the poniard in the hands of the monk."—*Indiana.*

into a rage. Aurore listened sadly and patiently. She trusted that another day would bring new light.

Re-reading *Indiana* in the solitude of his hermitage at Aulnay, however, Delatouche reconsidered. What an apt pupil she was, after all! It was full of good writing. She had sipped very modestly from the poison-cup of romantic horrors. She led her lovers to the precipice in the Indian isle where they intended to put an end to the tedium of living—" Be careful to jump *out*," said the thoughful Sir Ralph, " so as to avoid the rocks,"—but at the moment when the reader closes his eyes to avoid the shocking sight of two bodies leaping over the cascade into the terrible chasm that recalled so startlingly the scenery of the Pyrenees, near Cauterets, the pen of the author paused, relented, and set a row of little black dots,—and enter a real Berrichon gentleman, Jules Néraud, traveller and naturalist (whose notebook of his Madagascar travels had assisted Aurore in constructing the local colour of her story), narrating to the relieved reader the pleasant visit he had made to the happy pair in their *chaumière indienne*, where they were living an idyllic life of labour and love, saving their money to redeem slaves, and happy in the discovery that the great world they had left was not worth a regret. Delatouche was satisfied that Balzac counted for very little in the working out of *Indiana*. The foster-child of Rousseau and Châteaubriand had simply poured the good old wine into bright, new bottles ; added a pinch of feminine revolt to the old themes, and would conquer the world with it.

Early the next morning a note was brought to the bedside of Mme. Dudevant. " George, I have come to make honourable amends ; I am at your feet. Forget my harshness of last night, forget all the hard things I have said to you for the past six months. I have spent the night reading you. Oh, my child, I am satisfied with you ! " Thus was wisdom justified of its children.

Already the pale, nebulous embodiment of her early mysticism had detached itself and floated away, at the moment when she began to give conscious expression to er imagination and emotions. Corambé and his accompanying hallucinations were exorcised by the ink-well. His work was done, for the

present, and he followed the defunct Aurore Dudevant back to the spirit world. Only a court decision was needed to complete the interment of the mystic Queen of the Convent des Anglaises. For the world, for her friends, for herself, for her children, for everybody, except the long-suffering and nearly extinct husband, she was henceforth George Sand. Whether tripping down the boulevards at night with her cane and her tall hat, or shrinking demurely in a corner, in all the glory of *décolleté* and embroidered satin slippers, at a drawing-room collection of lions, or in her *robe de chambre*, occupied in the humble duties of a simple *ménage* with her two children rolling on the carpet at her feet, her pen-name was as completely identified with her person as was her eternal cigarette.

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At first Aurore was rather frightened by the sudden celebrity of George Sand. Instead of writing to amuse herself, behind the screen of " another man's name," she found herself unexpectedly revealed to the audience and exposed to all the embarrassment of its praise or censure. A terrifying reputation loomed before her, which she must henceforth live up to, whether she wished to or not. " I have no time to watch my life flow on now," she wrote, and she followed up Austerlitz by Jéna. Before the sheets of *Indiana* were dry, she had *Valentine* ready, which was even better. Both books were written at Nohant during her trimestrial visits which had been part of the " gentleman's agreement " with Casimir ; shut up in her boudoir, with Solange climbing on her shoulders and Maurice cutting his second teeth and struggling with Latin at her side. All of which goes to prove that even in 1833 one could rise to great fame and have a " career " without sacrificing the affectionate and natural duties of maternity.

Publishers and editors now began to flock up her five long flights of stairs with offers and bribes. They found a small, dark, embarrassed person, enveloped in cigarette smoke, whose ideas of remuneration were so ridiculously modest that they were obliged to raise their own bids. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* now entered the arena in the struggle to obtain her magnificent works. This magazine had recently been purchased by the shrewd and brutal Buloz, prince of editors, who

never failed to detect the rising genius, and controlled the purse-strings of most of the coming great poets, novelists, critics, historians and publicists of France. With him George Sand concluded a contract to furnish thirty-two pages of manuscript every six weeks, for three thousand francs a year. She gasped at her good fortune like an inexperienced gambler who sees the ball stop over his own five franc piece.

After the publishers came the reviewers, who had been the bulls of the market. They were curious to see the hidden divinity who, it was rumoured, had run away from her husband to lead an eccentric life as a *garçon* in an attic of the Quartier Latin, and was making novels out of her unhappy domestic experiences. Warned that the divinity would in all probability sulk behind her smoke-screen and refuse to shine, they approached cautiously, one at a time, escorted by some mutual friend, and were disappointed to find only a shy, very feminine person, in a simple dark *robe-de-chambre*, with large, heavy-lidded black eyes, as inexpressive as a cow's, a smooth, high, tranquil forehead, unfurrowed by thought or suffering.

First came the intrepid Gustave Planche, wielder of the thunderbolts of *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, with a touch of the Johnsonian instinct for sonorous phrasing. Having hailed *Indiana* enthusiastically, he wrote of *Valentine :* " At each page the picture threatens to be lascivious and yet there is not a page which is not of irreproachable purity." This was a review which might easily be worth every penny of Buloz's three thousand francs to her, and when to such intriguing insinuations Planche added that the night scene between the heroine and the hero could only be compared to a similar scene in *Romeo and Juliette*, he had every reason to count on a gracious reception when he carried his huge bulk up the stairs to her Ivory Tower. The very young George Sand was just then entering upon the " Woman in Revolt " stage of her evolution, a *rôle* which had been so persistently forced upon her by the omniscient critics that it was inevitably adopted. It went well with the sense of disillusion that, in romantic temperaments, attends upon success. With the pliability of her sex, George bent gracefully at first to the iron sceptre of her new friend, but she rebelled under a prolonged *régime* of irony and

dogmatism. The revolt was accelerated by the pretensions of Planche to functions of successor to the dethroned Sandeau. He was brilliant and clever, but he was too dirty for a lover. He had very beautiful hands, but he ate macaroni with his fingers and his prejudice against soap was proverbial. One day George presented him with six bath tablets, threatening to close her doors to him unless he used them. The next time he came she inspected his hands. " What ! " she cried, " in the same condition still ? "

" No, indeed," he protested, " I have used one of your tablets. Feel of my hair ; it is still wet ! "

" But your hands ! "

" Oh, my hands ! Quite possible. I read in my bath and naturally, I held my book out of the water."

So, while the poor deluded world insisted on believing him her lover, Planche had to be contented with the office of perpetual trainbearer.

Planche brought Sainte-Beuve. George was so embarrassed when meeting strangers that there must always be a friend present at first visits, as a sort of buffer or lubricator of the encounter. " Did you warn him I am always *bête ?* " she usually asked beforehand. Sainte-Beuve had already paid homage to *Indiana* in one of his graceful *Causeries*. He had also had occasion to grant tickets for the *première* of *Lucrezia Borgia*, in response to a note from George Sand begging that favour " for myself and my pseudonym, as we are both fervent admirers of Victor Hugo." Like all the others he was curious to see her, but at the same time a little nervous, lest even the safeguard of a previous and satisfactory engagement of his affections be not sufficient guarantee against her reputed fascinations. He was a brisk, trim little man, with a bald head and small friendly eyes under bushy red eyebrows, a plump, pleasant face, and a neat, smiling mouth, above a self-satisfied chin. Men thought him ugly and wondered why the women liked him ; but his physical deficiencies were atoned for by his intelligent interest in all the little details and secrets of feminine affairs. He was essentially a ladies' man, the perfect pattern of a suave and sympathetic father-confessor. George fitted at once into his literary harem and found in him a patient

listener and tactful adviser in all her problems and difficulties, intellectual, moral and sentimental. She reserved him strictly for this part, and never adopted him for a lover or put him in a book, and he discreetly avoided all appearance of evil. He was almost the only one of her followers who could hear her name mentioned without sighing like a furnace and breaking into melancholy reminiscences.

Balzac was at that time living on the ground-floor of a small house on the Rue Cassini, near the Carmelite Convent where the " Holy Women prayed the Lord that Honoré de Balzac might have genius." He had spent the proceeds of his first successful novel, *La Peau de Chagrin*, together with the anticipated returns of several others not yet born, in refurnishing his modest rooms, fitting them up with rich hangings, embroideries, and bibelots, a riot of fantastic luxury fit for the boudoir of a *marquise*. George Sand had met him first through Jules Sandeau and he had then initiated her into the luxuries of that *Vie de Bohéme*, that entertains its friends on a banquet of boiled beef and melon, served on rare porcelain and crystal and antique silver. The feast over, Balzac had escorted his guests as far as the Luxembourg, lighted by one of his tall red candlesticks, a new and temperamental cardinal silk dressing-gown wrapped about his fat paunch, discoursing earnestly all the way on the four Arabian steeds he expected soon to own, and a marvellous financial scheme of his own invention which was bound to bring him an enormous fortune.

Balzac entertained no very high opinion of George Sand's novels ; their methods were too unlike. " You seek for man as he ought to be," he explained to her ; " I take him as he is. I like exceptional people because I am one myself, and I exaggerate their faults. They give you the nightmare, and so you won't look at them. That's all well enough for you ; to contemplate the ideal and the agreeable is a woman's province." However, to encourage her he sometimes climbed her stairs to see her work, with the kind intention of offering some criticism, but he immediately forgot what he came for, and pulled one of his own manuscripts from his pocket to read to her. Listening was George's strong suit, so they got on famously except when he tried to read her the *Contes Drolatiques*,

for George had a chaste mind, and refused to listen to some of the indecencies. When he persisted, she snatched the manuscript from his hand, and threw it at him, and Balzac departed in wrath, shouting back that she was a prude and a fool. But he forgave her and painted her as the noble Camille Maupin in his novel, *Béatrix*, with that pleasant freedom that authors of that time observed in appropriating the personality of their friends for literary purposes.

George Sand had a chaste mind, but she had the misfortune to base the plots of her novels on principles and opinions that the conservative public did not consider chaste. Although *Indiana* had furnished consolation to thousands of unhappy wives and encouraged hundreds of emancipated young writers, it was branded by the Philistines as immoral and its author was accused of having attacked the sacred institution of marriage and the sanctity of the home. It was compared to Mme. de Staël's *Delphine*. All this helped the sales, but surprised and shocked the author. If *Indiana*, written in six weeks under the pressure of strong personal emotions, was anything more than an interesting story, then it was the reaction of Aurore Dudevant to the disagreeable domestic conditions that had in the past interfered with the free expression of her own personality, a reaction coloured and tempered by the romantic spirit of 1830. Indiana, herself, when accused by her cynical lover of having imbibed her ideas of love from romances, like a waiting-maid, acknowledged, " What alarms and terrifies me is that you are right."

If any institution was involved, that was incidental. Her impatience of opposing and compelling forces whenever they thwarted this personality, an impatience which Mme. Dupin and Mme. Alicia had called wilfulness, was due, she decided, to a noble sentiment (whose counterpart was to be found in the works of Jean Jacques)—her innate horror of slavery. When this sentiment was applied to the relations of sex, which was, for obvious reasons, uppermost in her mind at present, several important corollaries were developed ; the first being that one of the worst forms of slavery was the enforced cohabitation of two beings without love. To submit is as base as to compel. The illusions by which the senses seek to create an incomplete

love is a mortal sin. One must love with all his being or live in complete chastity. To have perceived this divine law, as she had done, for instance, after she met Aurélien, and to have refused to sacrifice to it, was another mortal sin. In renouncing Aurélien she had, she now recognised, crucified, not the flesh but a principle of virtue.

All these conclusions to which circumstances had forced Mme. Dudevant were very interestingly brought out in the story of Indiana, a passionate young Creole, unsuitably mated to an elderly country gentleman for whose portrait Casimir had evidently sat. He was not wholly bad or insensible, this husband of Indiana's, the typical bourgeois *honnête homme*, and of course very trying for a temperamental young lady to live with. But Indiana was sincere, and would have blushed to flatter him in words provided she respected him in her actions. She shared Mme. Dudevant's views, it will be seen, and she nursed her tyrannical old husband tenderly when he was ill in spite of his many unpleasant habits. But the time came when she had to desert him, even on his deathbed, in order to perform the most sacred sacrifice a woman ever offered, the sacrifice of her duty to her Love.

Raymon, the lover for whom she made the sacrifice (who bore many of the social and intellectual marks of Aurélien de Sèze) was plainly unworthy of her brave and noble act. He was unable to appreciate the loftiness of her principles, and, tiring of her devotion, he deserted her for a rich marriage. But this unworthiness of the object in no wise detracted from the nobility of Indiana's sacrifice. The glory lay in the act of sacrifice itself. It may be disappointing to discover that one's affections are not wisely placed, but the divine sentiment of Love sustains and elevates the soul above considerations of selfish interest.

Love had also taught Indiana another lesson, that of the sweetness of independence: "I have breathed the air of liberty (she said to her husband) in order to show you that morally you are not my master and that I depend only upon myself. You lost the right to influence me the moment you attempted to do it by force. I am ready to aid you and to follow you (to the Indian Ocean where he was going to repair

his fortune), not because such is your will but because such is my intention. You may condemn me, but I will never obey anyone but myself."

It is clear that after this speech nothing remained for Indiana but to live in the Quartier Latin and write stories of ill-assorted marriages instead of contemplating suicide on the brink of a precipice in *L'Isle de Bourbon*. But the true artist does not push autobiography too far.

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Indiana's husband conveniently died and enabled her to arrange her life satisfactorily in the end, on a perfectly romantic basis. Casimir Dudevant, on the contrary, remained solidly planted on his wife's ancestral domains, and thus complicated the solution of her problems. Since she felt no moral aversion for him, she was able to establish a kind of cordial fraternal association with him, which worked pleasantly enough at first. By alternating her Paris sojourns with three months at Nohant, she compromised sufficiently with the world's standards and with her artistic requirements to keep her domestic relations working on half-time. Likewise, Casimir paid an occasional visit to Paris, just to show that there was no hard feeling; stopping considerately at Hippolyte's apartments so as not to overcrowd her small and modest *ménage*. Her new friends there were curious to see this mysterious husband and were expected to keep him entertained when she was occupied. Planche was aroused early one morning by a peremptory summons to rise and dress at once. "What for?" he inquired. "To go to the coach office," George's voice answered from the other side of the door. "What for?" "To meet Casimir." Curiosity to see this legendary being overcame Planche's customary lassitude and he complied. He found a bluff country gentleman, a little peevish, perhaps, after the journey and slightly rustic in his appearance, wearing a thick cap with ear-tabs which he declined to remove. George requisitioned him for the day to escort her husband about Paris, supplying him with theatre tickets and making a liberal allowance for cabs, lunch at the Palais Royal and dinner. She did not shirk her share of the entertaining either, and played the host so prodigally that she observed an enforced period of economies,

pedestrianism and diet of onions after Casimir's return to Nohant. Her hospitality was repaid by a new dress, and the visit ended amiably. " Did you have a good trip home, *mon vieux?* " she wrote him. " Weren't cold? How happy your return must have made them all! " Nevertheless these interferences with the routine of an artist's life are disturbing, and George took to her bed soon after with a cerebral congestion and was nursed night and day by Émile Regnault, one of Sandeau's friends.

When Mme. Dudevant went to Nohant, the stage was set for the edification of the small souls of La Châtre, where it was currently reported that she had eloped to Italy with one of the numerous lovers attributed to her by outraged provincial opinion. News spreads fast in a small town, and everyone knew when Casimir went to Châteauroux to meet the coach from Paris, taking Maurice with him. Later, it was understood that the reunited pair were beautifully sharing the duties of their little son's education, Mme. Dudevant teaching French and geography, while Casimir, who was strong on figures, undertook the Latin and arithmetic. The dreadfully immoral Mme. Dudevant, playing ball and blindman's buff with her children on the lawn at Nohant, while their uncle Hippolyte danced and rolled about the terrace like a clown until they all screamed with delight, presented a picture of domestic felicity that disarmed the busy-bodies.

Some of George's best writing was done at Nohant, which did not offer the distractions of her Paris literary environment. In a letter to a friend, she had once sketched humorously her conception of an ideal husband which was not very far from the manner in which this association for mutual liberty and respect actually functioned when she was at Nohant.

" My will and tastes lead me to write from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. in my study on the ground floor, at the north-east corner of the house. During this time (the Ideal Husband) will be free to sleep in his apartment, first floor, south-east corner of the house. At two, necessity demands that I sleep till nine. The said (I.H.) can attend to his affairs and pleasures, certain not to be disturbed. He can do what he likes until after my lunch. Then I will deign to admit him to my royal presence to read

my papers and to offer me a pinch of tobacco, etc. After reading the papers he will write two or three letters at my dictation, saddle my horse, etc."

Outwardly, therefore, the arrangement worked smoothly and the gossips were silenced. Those who were in the inner circle of the Nohant friends, however, knew that the strain on this unnatural union was rapidly weakening the foundations. Hippolyte, when he was sober enough to understand, the Fleurys, the Duteils, the Duvernets, all were frequent and embarrassed witnesses of the friction and the unpleasant scenes that every day arose between this uncongenial pair. They were not splendid disputes about principles or beliefs, but ignoble clashes over the children, the servants, the wine-cellar, the cream-pitcher ; questions of taste, questions of money, which was always scarce at Nohant. And all foresaw that a crash was imminent.

It would be hard to say which was the most relieved, Casimir, Aurore, or their friends, when the three months were up and the châtelaine of Nohant returned to her Bohemian life. For Aurore, it was a release from prison, notwithstanding her attachment to her old home in Berry. As the money from her novels began to come in, she was able to afford a better style of living and to move from her " attic " to a more spacious and comfortable apartment on the Quai Malaquais, lately vacated by Delatouche, and to have a cook and a *bonne* for Solange, whom she had brought back from Nohant when she brought *Indiana*. Her rooms looked on a big, shady garden, where sparrows chirped and a fountain dripped, to keep her from being homesick. So, while Casimir was left in peace to pursue his lonely way among taverns and servant-girls, George Sand shut herself up in the evenings with her piano, pens, ink-well and a fire, embroidering slippers for Maurice, while plump, rosy little Solange played on a thick, warm carpet with her kitten.

There was always a hearty welcome from the " old crowd " at Paris, which was constantly expanding to take in new recruits. Planet, Papet, Pyat, Stéphane Grandsaigne, Adolphe Duplombe, Planche, were always about, and ready to strew her path with roses. Maurice, homesick and lonely at the Lycée

Henri Quatre, must be given an airing : Planche lays down his pen and takes him to see the giraffes at the Jardin des Plantes. Solange wants to see the elephants dance and eat salad at Franconi's : Fleury's sturdy shoulders are at hand to bear her through the crowd. George is moving, and a half-dozen handy youths offer to assist. The cholera visits Paris and George shows disquieting symptoms : devoted admirers in relays of two sleep on the floor beside her and ply her diligently with heated blankets and strong tea. A market for her books is desired in Bordeaux, and Adolphe Duplombe, her pet " Hydrogène," makes excellent placements with the booksellers, at the same time providing her larder with coffee, confiture and wine from his father's Bordeaux warehouse.

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And yet she was not happy. " Friends, oh my friends," she wrote. " What a rare treasure they are and how difficult to keep ! If one does not keep his hand tightly closed, they escape like water through the fingers." She could not forget Sandeau.

The faithful but unimaginative Boucoiran selected an inopportune moment in which to call her attention to the inconstancy of her character. George suggested gently that he confine his remarks in his letters to news of her son. She was deeply wounded.

" You reproach me for my numerous *liaisons*, my frivolous friendships. My dear child, but I never attempt to justify myself against accusations bearing on my character. I can explain facts and deeds ; faults of mind and freaks of my heart, never. Besides, as far as I am concerned, I neither adore nor revere myself. . . . When we discover great faults in the soul of someone we love we must consider whether we can continue to love them still, notwithstanding. The wisest thing is to stop ; the kindest is to continue. But to complete the generosity, one should not mention the fault. . . . To reproach for a past already behind, to see errors one considers unpardonable without mentioning them, and then condemn them when it is too late, is unjust. To say to someone you love, your heart is cold, light or weak, that is hard, that is cruel !

" It is a humiliation uselessly inflicted ; causes suffering

without making things better. Withered hearts never get mellow; worn-out hearts never can grow young again; incomplete hearts get no sympathy or pity. If that is my fate, it is brutal to point it out to me."

It was on this text that she wrote *Lélia*.

CHAPTER VI

LÉLIA OF THE MARBLE HEART

" Tu fus un marbre solide et pur, et tu sortis de la main de Dieu, fier et sans tache, comme une statue neuve sort tout blanche de l'atelier, et monte sur son piédestal d'un air orgueilleux. Mais te voilà rongé par le temps, comme une de ces allégories usées, qui se tiennent encore debout, dans les jardins abandonnés. Tant d'orages ont ternis ton éclat que ceux qui passent par hasard à tes pieds, ne savent plus si tu es d'alabâtre ou d'argile sous ce crèpe mortuaire. Tu décores très bien le désert ; pourquoi sembles-tu t'ennuyer de la solitude ? "

Lettres d'un Voyageur.[1]

George believed that she had an instinct for discovering beautiful souls. She found in the relations of perfect friendship a sanctuary from the storms of *amour* that was rarely violated. Her fraternal union with François Rollinat, who was, of course, several years her junior, was one of these ideal friendships whose serenity was unclouded by jealousies or misunderstandings. It was like a romance of chivalry, or like the calm disinterested devotion of her favourite Montaigne to La Boétie.

Dudevant had been, unintentionally, the means of bringing these twin souls together. He had invited Rollinat, who was the son of a prominent lawyer at Châteauroux, to spend a few days at Nohant during one of his wife's periodical returns to a family life, and at a moment when a platonic friendship was particularly necessary to fill a certain void in her soul. She and François at once discovered that they had many similar

[1] " Thou wast of pure and solid marble, and thou camest from the hand of God, proud and flawless, as a statue comes, snow-white from the studio, and proudly mounts its pedestal. But behold thee now, weatherbeaten like one of those dilapidated allegorical figures, that still stand in abandoned gardens.—So many storms have dimmed thy glory, that those who chance to pass beneath thee no longer know if thou art of alabaster or of clay, under this funeral crape.—Thou adornest well the desert ; why seemest thou to weary of solitude ? "—*Letters of a Traveller.*

qualities and tastes—their fondness for revery, for analysis, their sudden alternations of deep emotion with outbursts of childish gaiety, their scorn of the appetites and pursuits of baser mortals, all made for complete understanding and sympathy. To these attractions Rollinat added the appeal to Mme. Dudevant's compassion (her maternal instincts always played an important part in all her *liaisons*, and pity or protection was a factor in every serious engagement of her heart)—for the elder Rollinat, having brought eleven children into the world, could think of no better way of providing for them than to retire from practice and leave his eldest son in possession of his office and the honourable burden of maintaining his family. For this responsibility the proceeds accruing from the remains of the old gentleman's practice were naturally heavily taxed, but François met his worries with the " patience of a Berrichon cow." George soon discovered that the soul of a mute, inglorious artist was hidden away under this bovine submissiveness, and that his awkward, absent-minded manner disguised a deeply philosophical and imaginative nature that revealed itself to the elect only. His society redeemed the aridness of her trimestrial retreats to the society of Casimir. Together they played *Werther* under the vast silences of the starry vault on summer nights, or paced the shady paths of Nohant discussing the universe, from English razors to Eternal Damnation. Many of the ideas with which they played found expression in a sort of prose-poem called *Lélia*, which, she wrote Rollinat, was a " perpetual *causerie* between us two," a " long letter " to him, which would atone for some gaps in their correspondence. It was a great deal to ask of a friend, especially when he was the sole prop and guide of ten children, to father *Lélia* too, for this book was the literary sensation of the year 1833, and was promptly put on the Papal Index.

The second volume of *Lélia* bore this inscription :

" Pourquoi promenez-vous ces spectres de lumière
Devant le rideau noir de nos nuits sans sommeil,
Puisqu'il faut qu'içi-bas tout songe ait son reveil,
Et puisque le désire se sent cloué sur terre
Comme un aigle blessé, qui meurt dans la poussière
L'aile ouverte, et les yeux fixés sur le soleil ? "

Like the wounded eagle, George kept her eyes always on the ideal. Likewise the symbolic woman, Lélia, even with her last breath, cried :

" For ten thousand years I have asked of the Infinite, Truth ! Truth ! " (that is, the Ideal). " For ten thousand years the Infinite has replied, Desire ! Desire ! " And Lélia, like Aurore, and like the eagle, expired in the dust with her problems and questions as unsolved as if she had been a character in a Tchekoff play, but with her wings still spread for flight into the mysterious Infinite.

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The year 1833 was the most miserable, Aurore believed, in her whole miserable life. Aurélien, putting the last nail in the coffin of *amitié*, was preparing to enter the bonds of matrimony ; Sandeau, the symbol of *amour*, pure and unrestrained, had betrayed her by a vulgar intrigue, and was banished from her life ; Paris was overshadowed by political disturbances and brutal reprisals, to which were added the horrors of an epidemic of cholera ; all this furnished enough dismal themes for a dozen Lélias. George took to reading *Obermann*, and her darkened brain played with the idea of suicide. She had reached the autumn of her youth, the threshold of thirty, and her principal problem, the reconciliation of sacred and profane love, remained as far from solution as ever. But, not being by nature a pessimist, no rebuffs could deter her in her search. She refused to abandon her life on a flat and mournful sea. " Better the tempest, better the lightning," she cried. " At least one sees, one feels himself perish." So she hoisted her sail of Platonism once more and continued her pursuit of a " love which would be as chaste and pure as the bed of a virgin," and a lover " on whose breast she could sleep as calmly and innocently as on her mother's."

Just at that time the interest in St. Simonism was at its height. Everybody had an opinion to express for or against some of its startling doctrines : the legitimacy of all natural instincts, the equality of the sexes, and a common moral standard for men and women. George had no fondness for " isms " or labels ; she never joined " movements " or tied herself up to creeds. A papess whose chief function was to

pose in blue velvet robes and a swansdown boa, did not answer her questionings of the infinite. So she did not mingle often with the crowds of the curious and the faithful who " sat under " the predications of the Père Enfantin. But she was always ready to hear the new ideas discussed, and welcomed to her circle some of the ardent disciples, like the amiable Père Bouffard, whose diet consisted of cold eggs and water, Mme. de Périgny who prophesied that Paris would flow with rivers of blood when the doctrines were put into practice, and Adolphe Guérault, whom she consulted about some of the ideas that were devastating the heart of Lélia. She had developed theories of her own about the relation of the sexes that might have been useful to the Père Enfantin. In an unpublished book, called *Marianne*, she had already shown that the unique moral principle of woman is her faculty of loving. It is her soul. If the man selected fails to satisfy this, the one thing she asks of him, she must, like the queen bee, seek again, and obey the impulse for whose satisfaction she was created. If this superwoman is unsuccessful in finding the worthy man, she becomes an erotic wandering Jew, seeking and never finding. And upon the man rests all the responsibility of her failure.

It was unfortunate that George's choice should have fallen on Prosper Mérimée for an experiment in this doctrine of the Quest. Mérimée took love lightly, not as a philosophy or a religion, but as a *comédie à deux*, a diversion. Virtue made him yawn, and he detested a *bas-bleu*. He was more interested in women's clothes than their souls, for he was fond of dress, and wore gay pantaloons and white waistcoats. Not that he was at all a bad man ; he boasted that he had never been bad, except for two years, when he was led astray by a noble and profligate friend. He went straight home at night after the theatre, kissed his mother good-night, caressed his cat, and spent the witching hours when less exemplary young men were abroad, conscientiously correcting proofs. But he was a bit spoiled and very clever, with glittering round eyes under thick eyebrows and the cold, haughty air of an Englishman. He was a sportsman, too, and liked a savage beauty, a tigress whose claws were dangerous. His keen brain coveted enigmas, and courted sphinxes. George's impenetrable eyes and her inde-

pendent *allure* promised an exciting chase. He never suspected that his merry jest was for her a last desperate effort to test her theory. One odious week was enough to prove the experiment a failure. Mérimée's gay malevolence turned her dream into a nightmare ; she had no weapons for fighting *esprit*. She had proved that the love of the senses could not satisfy her cravings.

The parting was bitter, but there were no tears. To Sainte-Beuve, patient, sympathetic Sainte-Beuve, who bore in his heart the secrets of so many confiding females, she poured out her humiliation and her disillusions. " I, austere, and almost a virgin, after having arrived at the conviction that years of intimacy could never bind me to another creature, imagined that the fascination of a few days would decide my existence. In short, at thirty, I behaved like a girl of fifteen.—The rest of the story is too odious to tell. But why should I be ashamed to be ridiculed as long as I was not guilty ? "

Mérimée's friends heard a version of the " one week " that was more entertaining than chivalrous, and the episode was promptly buried. But he was unable to resist the novelist's weakness for making copy of personal adventures. *La Double Méprise* delicately portrays the ephemeral loves of Prosper and the author of *Lélia*. George too, profited by the sad experience in her next book, but only psychologically. Sténio, the youthful lover of Lélia, who was a pure and innocent boy when he fell under her baneful fascination, became in time disillusioned to the point of assuring a wretched monk, who was trying unsuccessfully to cast out his own unholy passion for Lélia, that a debauch of the senses is more effective than their repression for the exorcism of sensuality. Sténio boasted that through his excesses he had reached the point where he could drink and not be drunk, see beauty and not lust for it. But Sténio had already lost his charm and become a cynic.

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The book of *Lélia* is a sort of prose-poem, written in a mystic and rhythmical declamatory style that is reminiscent of the Hebrew prophets, or of the dialogues between the disconsolate Job and his comforting friends. As if to the accom-

paniment of magnificent chords struck from a harp, the apparently disembodied voices of Lélia and the lovesick Sténio rise and fall in alternating cadences. Then the curtain rises upon a glittering ball, a sumptuous garden party given by the princely Oriental, Bambucci. The night is waning, the flowers are drooping, the candles are paling, the strains of the orchestra are dying, and the dancers are vanishing into the shrubbery. The spotlight falls on the regal figure of Lélia, a sort of Proserpine, " pale beyond porch and portal," disdainfully contemplating all things mortal, as she leans against a *cyppe* of antique bronze. She is clad in black satin, and her jet-black hair, thrown back from her broad white brow, reveals a forehead on which the finger of God seems to have printed the seal of a mysterious curse. For this peerless beauty, who seems to be the embodiment of every perfection, is a very old soul—the incarnate spirit of the ages. " Moi qui aie vécu tant de vies ! " While the youth of the senses is short, that of the heart is long, and her heart had survived her senses. She had opened the book of life at the wrong end, at the chapter of knowledge instead of that of pleasure, and when the time came to live it was too late, for she had already used up her emotions and there was no means of enjoyment left for her. She tried in vain to love ; to love a musician and then a painter, an actor, a philosopher, even the picture of a dead man ; but her heart was impotent. God, who had given to the stamens of flowers the power of love, and to the stupid *madrépore* the sense of physical satisfaction, and sun to drooping plants, and dew to sprouting grasses, had withdrawn his grace from Lélia. This was the curse she bore on her proud marble brow. Her sister Pulchrérie, who was a courtesan, reproved her for wandering about the world weeping for her dead passions ; it made her, she said, as vulgar as the poets. All her lovers, those who desired to be her lovers and who were unable to understand her diagnosis of her malady, offered consolation that was not at all to the point. They did not know that it was better to kill Lélia than to comfort her.

Under the strain of this mental suffering, she naturally fell ill, apparently unto death. But the smiling Dr. Kreysneifetter assured her that there was nothing to fear—it was merely an

attack of cholera morbus, the commonest thing in the world, a malady which had no terrors for those who knew how to jest at it. And he rashly permitted her to drink punch. Although she had already begun to turn blue, Lélia bravely accepted a pinch of snuff from his gold snuff box, while she talked philosophy with the bystanders, and immediately afterwards had a convulsion in Sténio's arms. A priest was hastily summoned, but he could not help, for he had no more faith in his religion than the doctor had in his science ; he was a theologian. And she was too proud anyway to turn to God for help ; indeed, she was only afraid that there was no God for her to curse for the monstrous sufferings of her soul.

It was the power of Sténio's love that saved Lélia ; and in gratitude she at last yielded to his prayers and entered the temple of Aphrodite. But first she delivered a dissertation on the psychological significance of love, which is the holy aspiration of the more ethereal part of our body toward the unknown, seeking in heaven a creature like ourselves. After she thought that she had made this quite clear to him, she gave him a long, chaste kiss. But she was as cold as ice, and poor Sténio, in his disappointment, at once fell ill with a fever. Her caresses were only maternal. " I pity you," Lélia said disdainfully ; " It is not a soul, then, that you seek ! It is a woman, isn't it ? " " I want both," groaned Sténio. " Can't you be a woman for a single day in my arms ? " Lélia's brow clouded. " Always the gross desire mixed with the sublime ecstasies of intelligence ! You should not adore me as a divinity and then ask me to be your slave, your Shulamite woman."

So Sténio drowned himself in the lake near the convent that she founded, and the peerless Lélia was finally strangled by the fanatical monk whom she had rejected. All of which is an allegory, whose theme is the experience of the soul of Aurore Dudevant incarnated in the person of George Sand.

Only one being in the story was untouched by the fatal finger of calamity, and kept his philosophy serenely intact through the ravings of passion and despair. Trenmor, the symbol of the self-sacrifice of the individual for the good of humanity, Trenmor, the ideal friend, who shared and understood all her fantastic obsessions, who else could he be but François Rollinat,

the burden-bearer of the family of ten, the faithful Pylade of George Sand ?

" It is you, strong, patient soul, obscure, laborious, submissive man—who shine in my dreams like a fixed star among the meteors of the night—of whom I dreamed when I wrote Trenmor. You will go, by means of this book, to the bottom of my soul, and to the bottom of yours."

Of course nobody understood *Lélia*, but everyone read it, openly or in private, and everybody had a theory about it, and damned it or exalted it to the skies, according to his age and lights. Those who took it home as pleasant digestive for the after-dinner hour at the fireside, regretted their money ; those who had a keen scent for brimstone, found that it reeked of St. Simonism and feminist heresies. Even the admiring Sainte-Beuve was obliged to confess that some of the expressions erred a little by their excessive *nudité*. But this, after all, was a secondary matter. " However corrosive the liquor of the chalice may be, the metal of the chalice is virgin and unchanged. You are a rare and strong nature," he wrote George. " To be a woman and not yet thirty, and to have sounded such abysses ! To carry this terrible knowledge and so easily ! "

Delatouche had criticised her first novel for being too moral. She had the happy idea to dedicate *Lélia* to him ; it bore witness to the progress she had made in two years. But Delatouche sulked and no longer cared to father her works ; he was jealous of his arch-enemy Gustave Planche, and said that George was being spoiled by success. He ungratefully attributed the dedication of *Lélia* to spite, and was more peevish than ever.

Yet, even while insisting that *Lélia* was the bravest and most sincere thing she had done, she was frightened at her Frankenstein. She tried to doctor it in a preface, explaining that it was pure allegory, and to substitute her own key to the situations for the more personal interpretations of an evil-minded public. Sténio was not Jules Sandeau, as was reported ; he was her own credulous eager youth ; Magnus, the monk, was herself again, in her early religious obsessions. Trenmor represented the serene philosophy she hoped one day to obtain. Indeed, one could read everything or nothing into *Lélia ;* " this book

so good, so bad, so true, so false, so serious, so trifling," as she pensively described it. But no one really believed her explanations, and as everyone continued to read it in his own way, she concluded that it was too much in the school of Corambé to be put into the hands of the average reader. As Sainte-Beuve had said, it was a book written once for all; there was no danger that she would ever do it again.

CHAPTER VII

LIVING POETRY

" On s'amuse de ma passion, comme d'une chose singulière, on la regarde comme une spectacle. On m'admire, on me recherche et on m'écoute, parceque je suis un poète ; mais quand j'ai dit mes vers, on me défend d'éprouver ce que j'ai raconté. 'Taisez-vous' dit-on, 'et gardez vos eglogues pour les réciter devant le monde, laissez donc le poète sur le bord du lac où vous le promenez, au fond du cabinet où vous travaillez.' Mais le poète, c'est Moi. Qu'est-ce donc la poésie? Croyez-vous que ce soit seulement l'art d'assembler des mots? "

Aldo le Rimeur.[1]

" I AM afraid of you ! " said Sainte-Beuve gravely, when he had finished reading the proofs of *Lélia*.

" It is a sad thing," George agreed. " Sometimes I am sorry I wrote it. I fear it may do harm. But don't confuse the individual with the emotion. Man is often less poetic than his demon."

It is unwise to betray the tricks of one's trade like that, but the truth was that George was already shedding *Lélia*. She was beginning to be bored by her cynical role. Deciding that *Lélia* was a symptom of physical derangement, she consulted a physician about her " spleen," and he astutely advised her to put away all causes of unhappiness, avoid all opposition, take plenty of fresh air, and acquire an appetite. She could prescribe as well as that herself ; she knew that she was still grieving over Sandeau, and smarting from her episode with Mérimée. It had been a mistake to apply a poultice when

[1] " They are amused by my passion, as if it were a peculiar thing, they stare at it as at a show. They admire me, they court me, they listen to me, because I am a poet ; but when I have recited my verses, they forbid me to feel what I have described. *Be still,* they say, *and keep your eclogues to recite before the world. Leave the poet on the edge of the Lake where you took him to walk, in the depths of the study where you work.* But the poet, it is ME. What is poetry ? Do you think it is merely the art of putting words together ? "—*Aldo the Rhymer.*

she needed a salve. She appealed to the serviceable Sainte-Beuve to furnish a *sympatico* friend, one who would make her forget. " You are nearer the angels than I," she wrote, alluding to his profession of orthodoxy rather than to the social circles he frequented. " Make my peace with God, in whom you still believe ; don't leave me to Satan."

Sainte-Beuve amiably reviewed his list and considered favourably the Benjamin of the romantic Cenacle, the infant prodigy of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Alfred de Musset, whose *Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie* had already established his reputation as something more than a mere virtuoso of drawing-room amours.

" Yes, bring him," George assented ; then after reflection, " No, I believe he is too dandified ; we would not be suited to each other. I prefer Dumas, in whom I think I detect a soul and who has asked to come. As for Alfred, I am curious, rather than interested, to know him, and I think it is imprudent to satisfy all one's curiosities."

Alfred de Musset at twenty-three, with the face of a young-eyed cherubim, had already probed the insipidity of drawing-room flirtations, and exhausted the mysteries of Paris night-life. He was discussed and adored in every salon, and was the darling of the literary circles, and toasted and petted by women of the world. His *svelte* and elegant figure, attired always according to the *dernier cri*, was the centre of attention on the boulevards and in the smart restaurants, where his floating blond hair, his vermilion lips, and his weary, nonchalant manner were extravagantly admired. Brought up under the tender and indulgent eyes of a doting mother, in the shelter of a refined home life, he had drunk deep of the cup of life, as conceived by the young, as soon as he had a chance. Being terribly cynical, of course, he loved to waltz with artless young débutantes, and to talk nonsense with them, and declared that he cared more for the sight of a pretty neck than for the changes of dynasties. He was saved from being merely a fast and dissipated young " swell " by his brilliant wit, his extraordinary imagination, and that remarkable capacity for emotional suffering that marks a romantic poet.

Fate reserved Dumas for subsequent and less pressing needs. Alfred and George met at a gathering of literary

celebrities, old and new, where, being the only woman, the author of *Indiana* and *Valentine* was much observed. The contrast between her sensational and rapid rise to the seat of the Olympians, and her quiet, self-effacing manner, intrigued the blasé Alfred, and he was captivated by her odd, exotic, almost Jewish beauty, if indeed it was beauty. Her pale, oval face, framed in dark curls, her singularly large, brooding eyes, not brilliant but gentle like an animal's, realised his favourite type of the " pearl of Andalusia " to which he had consecrated some of his loveliest verses. The resemblance was heightened by her Spanish style of dress—a simple black gown, with a soft black lace fichu, and a bright flower in her hair, above the ear. The poet discerned ten years of suffering in those dusky eyes and an inextinguishable desire for happiness ; her face was full of passionate promise, and invited more intimate knowledge. The fastidious standards of this Beau Brummel capitulated before the mysterious fascination of Mme. Sand.

George, on her part, surveyed the young poet from under her heavy eyelids, and recognised in the perfumed idol an élite and solitary spirit, mobile, exposed to all the perils of a pleasure-loving nature, whose sorrows were exceptional because his soul was unique. The soul, in short, which she had dreamed of all her life, sought in many *épreuves*, despaired of ever meeting. She invited him to the Quai Malaquais ; he accepted at once. In a short time they were exchanging formal notes.

The courtship of literary lovers is facilitated by delicate and graceful media not accessible to grosser spirits. Early in August (they had met in the late spring) Alfred sent George a poem—" After reading *Indiana*." She responded with a presentation copy of *Lélia* in two volumes, fresh from the press ; the first inscribed, " To Monsieur mon gamin d'Alfred—George " ; the second, " To Monsieur le Vicomte Alfred de Musset." The stage of formalities was past. " I am in love with you," wrote Alfred in his tenth letter ; " I love you like a child," said his eleventh. The twenty-first of August George wrote Sainte-Beuve that she was de Musset's mistress and that she did not care who knew it. She had thrown her sleeve after her coif, and wanted to proclaim her happiness on the housetop.

* * * * *

Meanwhile a tempest of enthusiasm, scandals and polemics raged around *Lélia*, which had just appeared. It was the best seller of the summer. The young people devoured it, and their elders refused to allow it in the house. Journalists shrieked and critics screamed for or against. Pervert ! Corrupter of morals, and blasphemer ! In the *National*, Sainte-Beuve prophesied that the ideal type of *Lélia* would become famous. In *Europe Littéraire*, Capo de Feuillide declared that no father could face his innocent children after reading it, and that one must lock oneself in a closet in order to peruse it secretly and ashamed. Planche took up his pen and then his sword in its defence. He explained that *Lélia* was not a novel but a poem, and must be interpreted symbolically. It was to be understood as " the century meditating on itself,"—the " cry of a society in agony." He gallantly challenged M. Capo de Feuillide to a duel. Alfred was disturbed at the turn affairs had taken, and so was George. It appeared that Planche, in posing as the avenger of *Lélia*, had gone beyond his rights and was assuming in relation to its distinguished author a position to which he was not entitled. If any one was going to avenge the insult to *Lélia* it ought to be the new and more fortunate Sténio. Alfred's sentiments were expressed less dramatically than Planche's, in some famous verses, anonymous and privately circulated, composed to the air of the *Complainte du Maréchal Saxe*. They were entitled, " Complainte historique et véritable sur le fameux Duel qui a eu lieu entre plusieurs Hommes de Plume, très connus dans Paris," and related how

" Monsieur Capo de Feuillide
Ayant insulté Lélia,
Monsieur Planche, ce jour-là
S'éveilla fort intrépide,
Et fit preuve de valeur
Entre midi et une heure." [1]

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[1] Monsieur Capo de Feuillide
Having insulted Lélia,
Monsieur Planche, that same day
Awoke feeling very bold,
And gave proofs of his valour
Between noon and one o'clock.

Buloz, the editor of *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, having been dragged yawning from his bed to serve as second in the duel, sat on the ground in mortal terror of stray shots during the bloody combat, crying " Au nom du ciel, que deviendra mon journal ? " and begged them to stop the carnage.

" Messieurs, c'est épouvantable,"
Leur dit Buloz, tout suant,
" George Sand, assurément
Est une femme agréable
Et pleine d'honnêteté,
Car elle m'a résisté."

" Messieurs, ce n'est pas pour elle,"
Dit Planche, " que je me bats ;
" J'ai ma raison pour cela ;
Je ne sais pas trop laquelle ;
Si je me bats, c'est pour moi,
Je ne sais pas trop pourquoi." [2]

The combatants being determined to fight, in spite of their imploring seconds, they stood four feet apart and shot off their pistols in the air, then fell sobbing into each other's arms and cried :

" Nous sommes deux intrépides ;
Je suis satisfait vraiment,
Vous aussi probablement."

" Alors ils se séparèrent
Et depuis ce jour fameux
Ils vécurent très heureux,
Et c'est de cette manière
Qu'on a enfin reconnu
De George Sand la vertu." [3]

Other versions of the event, which were circulated in the clubs and salons, accused Planche of having killed a passing

[2] " Gentlemen, this is frightful,"
Said Buloz, all in a sweat,
" George Sand assuredly
Is an agreeable woman
And full of honesty,
For she has resisted me."

" Gentlemen, it is not for her,"
Said Planche, " that I am fighting ;
I have my reasons for it ;
I am not quite sure what they are.
If I fight, it is for myself,
I don't know why any too well."

[3] " We are two intrepid men ;
I am satisfied, truly
You too, probably."

Then they separated
And since this famous day
They have lived very happily,
And this was the way
People at last recognised
The virtue of George Sand."

cow instead of his adversary, and Buloz of having grudgingly advanced the money to pay the damages.

Alfred was jealous of his lady's reputation, and Planche had to be firmly dealt with. George had a fraternal talk with him in which she expressed her esteem for him as a critic, but also explained the scandal that might arise should Lélia appear to be entertaining two lovers at the same time. Planche saw the point was well taken, and they parted friends. From that time his devotion was confined to laudatory articles whenever she wrote a new novel, and to profound sighs and melancholy songs when he was in his cups.

The battle continued to rage about *Lélia*, and being much exhausted by her emotions, George longed to carry her love into some vast wilderness, far from the clamour of tongues. Alfred too, wanted to avoid for the moment the over-zealous surveillance of his elder brother, Paul de Musset, so they fled to Fontainebleau together. Here passed the second "fytte" of their idyll, while they wandered beneath the lofty arches of the forest aisles, or lay all night on some warm mossy rock, staring up at the bright September moon. The rock thus consecrated symbolized the altar of their love, and through the dark branches of the trees they beheld angels ascending and descending on a ladder of dreams that reached to the splendid starry heavens. "God has shut Lélia's mouth by giving her back her youth and her happiness," she said.

When Fontainebleau's thrills were exhausted, the lovers returned to Paris and were openly inseparable. Romantic artists in Paris in the eighteen-thirties considered themselves automatically released from the constraints and prejudices of the world's standards. Alfred moved his books and pictures to the Quai Malaquais, where they more than filled the bare spaces left by the removal of Sandeau's possessions. They were like a pair of children who wanted to see all their friends happy too, and to make them share as well as behold their bliss. They gave many informal dinners, after which the guests cooled their excess of *esprit* at the theatre or in midnight promenades of the boulevards. George's favourite form of diversion was "mystification" and masquerades. The famous Pierrot, Deburau, whom she had met on one of her wild larks with Sandeau and

the Berry " bunch," was sometimes her guest, and was on one occasion presented to the company as an " English diplomat " —a part he kept magnificently throughout the dinner " without once picking his teeth," concluding a conversation on politics, when they reached the dessert, by unexpectedly juggling with his plate. Musset officiated at the same dinner, as a green Norman waitress, and awkwardly spilled water on the guests. *Esprit* flowed at Quai Malaquais day and night, and although the temperamental Alfred proved on acquaintance to possess a few little habits that annoyed his mistress, he was on the whole so *bon enfant* and took her scoldings so sweetly that the future glowed even more golden than the present.

* * * * *

It was one of life's little ironies that Jules Sandeau should have written an article on the poetry of de Musset in the July number of the *Journal des Débats*, in which, after attacking his " rocky verse " and " mediocre imitation of Byron," he ended with the suggestion that Alfred's Muse would profit by a journey to Italy. Before the snow flew, George was making her plans for a trip with her lover to the enchanted land where Byron wept and Tasso sang. Casimir, to whom she sent a business-like statement of her debts and dispositions in anticipation of a prolonged absence from Paris, made no outward sign of disapprobation. His wife's irregularities were completely out of the sphere of his experiences now, and he exhibited a praiseworthy tact in refraining from awkward questions about matters that did not concern him. All he asked was to be left at Nohant in peace. Maurice was still languishing at the Lycée Henri Quatre, by his father's decree. Not trusting to the agony of a farewell with her son, George took leave of him by letter, instructing him to wash his hands, polish his phiz, divide his Christmas holidays between his two grandmothers, and not over-eat. He was begged to write often to his mother, who was going away on account of her rheumatism, and to keep her informed of his marks at school. Solange had grown so beautiful that George wept when she left her at Nohant with her nurse, and Casimir was made to promise that he would not send her to boarding-school before her mother's return. To the reliable Boucoiran, " discreet as a

block of marble," was left the task of closing her apartment, with all its souvenirs of Alfred's occupation. " Lock up everything and take the key to all drawers with you," she wrote. Casimir was not beyond the point of an excusable attack of curiosity, it seems.

The financial outlay was to be met by the products of their respective pens and brains. Italy would pay for itself, and the prudent Buloz was persuaded to advance certain sums on faith. He knew he could trust George to meet her obligations on time. The last and most delicate part of the preparations—that of inducing Mme. de Musset to sanction her son's departure on this Bohemian voyage, devolved, like all the rest, on the executive George. Alfred's mother was not overjoyed at this abduction of her darling boy by a woman six years his senior, who had written immoral books, lived unconventionally, and donned masculine clothing when so inclined. Alfred was worried, for he was a mother's boy, and had a proper French regard for his elders. " Leave her to me," said George. The interview was crowned with success. George left Mme. de Musset charmed with the kind and devoted friend who had promised to watch over Alfred as a mother.

Their route took them by Marseilles, Genoa, Pisa and Florence. They fell in with Mérimée's friend Stendhal on the way, and George was annoyed by his satirical mockery of their illusions about Italy. He was a little drunk, and she thought him obscene, and was glad when they parted. Alfred's notebook was soon filled with sketches of his travelling companion ; George in her dressing-gown ; George making purchases in a bric-à-brac shop ; George in Turkish costume, with a chibouque ; George smiling coquettishly behind a fan ; George smoking a cigarette while he sat beside her seasick.

Souls steeped in Romanticism love without reserve and expect to be loved unreservedly in return. A few ominous little clouds which arose from time to time dimmed their transports momentarily, unaccountable reservations on George's part and unreasonable suspicions on Alfred's, which were not in the bond ; the clash of two intensely emotional organisations impinging on each other. At Florence Alfred discovered that he was suffering from an overdose of cathedrals and art

galleries, and tried a *régime* of Nachtsleben as an antidote. George, also a bit satiated, remembered her obligations to Buloz, and virtuously spread out her pens and papers on the grimy table-cover in their barren hotel room. At the sight of the ink-well the floodgates of her imagination were opened and a continuous stream of ideas filled sheet after sheet. Alfred disdained such automatic and unremittent inspiration. His muse was not so easily invoked. It blew when and where it listed, but could not be coaxed nor compelled. He ridiculed her conscientious productiveness, so independent of mood and environment. Alfred was an artist in disposition as well as in methods of work. He could be deliciously tender and confiding one moment, and cuttingly sarcastic, silent and cold the next. George never forgot to be romantic, never deserted her Gods, but the impious Alfred, when in one of his refractory moods, could ridicule the rhapsodies of Héloïse and the whine of Werther like a dyed-in-the-wool classicist. Above all, he detested machine-made literature, and bourgeois conscientiousness. " I am not born like you, with a little steel spring in my brain, of which I have only to press a button and it will function," he said. If George wanted to sit with her nose to the literary grindstone all night, she might, but she was not a pattern for him, and he would seek diversion elsewhere, in the type of resort already familiar to him. In the morning there were tears, *douleurs*, and George developed a fever. Alfred had been unfaithful. " Oh là-là ! " said Alfred. " Anything but an ailing, weeping woman, with the face of a sick bird ! " And he left her again. The following day there were apologies, reconciliations, caresses. Each suffered horribly, but George suffered most, because she was the passive one. When de Musset was excited he lost all control of himself, and trembled with passion and talked shockingly. George began to suspect that he might be mentally unbalanced. She knew him so little, after all ! Alfred began to think that her reputation for tolerance and progressive ideas was only literary and that at heart she was a *bas-bleu*.

When it became necessary to decide between Rome and Venice as their next objective, they were so exhausted by their dissensions and had become so indifferent to the enchantment

of Italy that they resorted to a toss up. The dice fell ten times face down for Venice ; they felt that destiny was driving them now !

" George," said Alfred, as they sat in the Casino Danieli the night after their arrival, cold, shivering and half sick, in the city of marble and water ; " I have made a mistake ; I beg your pardon for it, but the fact is, I do not love you." A dignified retreat and the next boat for France would have been the answer of a commonplace heroine in such a situation ; but they were romantic lovers, and they were in Venice. The affair was handled otherwise. George too was mindful of the confidence Mme. de Musset had expressed in her as guardian angel of the tender Alfred. To desert him now, in a strange land, without money, unable to speak the language, was to betray her trust and to outrage all her maternal instincts. Moreover, something was due to herself ; she had an appointment for the next day with an Italian doctor to come and bleed her. She therefore took a more picturesque method of revenge, and with the door between their rooms sternly closed, protecting her like the sword of Siegfried, she resumed a celibate life.

* * * * *

Two young Italians, sauntering along the Riva dei Schiavone under the windows of the Hotel Danieli, were attracted by a *iolie brunette*, who sat on a balcony over the Ponte della Paglia, smoking a *pasquita*. She wore a scarlet silk handkerchief folded over her black curls like a turban, and a loose scarf knotted about her neck under a snow-white collar, which set off her pale olive skin and her large melancholy eyes. Beside her was a very blond and bored young man. The Italians discussed with animation the nationality of this extraordinary stranger ; was she a reincarnation of the famous Lady Montague, or an exiled Polish countess ?

One of these young gentlemen was Pietro Pagello, who had lately come to Venice as assistant surgeon at the Ospedale Civile, and as he lodged near the Danieli, he happened to have an appointment for the next day to bleed a guest of the hotel, who was suffering from headaches. His patient of course proved to be the lady of the balcony, who was wearing the same red turban, and was attended by the same blond youth.

When he left the hotel this susceptible young surgeon said to himself, ' You will see this lady again and she will reign over you ! "

Two weeks later he received a note from her, written in passable Italian, begging him to come to her sick friend. The note was signed " George Sand." It contained very explicit details about the symptoms and general condition of his prospective patient.

" Since he became ill his mind has weakened and he is like a child. He is a poet greatly admired in France, but the exaltation of his emotions, wine, feasting, women, gambling, have greatly affected and excited his nerves. He sees phantoms about him and cries out with fear and horror. He does not know what he says or does. He weeps ; he complains of pain he cannot name or explain. He is the person I love best in the whole world, and I am in great agony to see him in this condition." Dr. Pagello had little difficulty in diagnosing the trouble ; his patient had been drinking the wine of Cyprus and passing the nights with facile beauties.

For several days Alfred's life was in danger. The doctor and George nursed him day and night, " the Sand " taking rest only when the doctor relieved her. Dr. Pagello found the case very interesting, and gave all his spare time to it. His compassion for the lady was only exceeded by his admiration for her courage and devotion. Her sweet confidence in him grew rapidly. For those painful vigils by the bedside of the suffering Alfred were not mute. While the delirious patient tossed and muttered, or lay in deep sleep, he was lulled by a soft, low murmur, a harmony of bass and contralto, whose theme was the art and poetry of Italy.

Perhaps those subdued harmonies aroused a vague uneasiness in the subconscious mind of the sufferer. Alfred, showing signs of convalescence, asked to be left alone, as he wanted to sleep quietly. Silence reigned in the adjoining room to which they withdrew. Dr. Pagello was curious to know something of the literary work of this interesting friend of his patient, and watched absent-mindedly while she bent over a table, writing by the light of a candle for over an hour. When she had finished she gave him what she had written as a souvenir. Its

title, *En Morée*, puzzled him. After reading it he decided that it signified the *Country of the Moors*, land of ardent passion.

" Shall I be thy companion or thy slave ?—When thy passion shall have been satisfied, shalt thou know how to thank me ? When I shall have rendered thee happy, shalt thou know how to tell me so ? Dost thou know what I am ? Or art thou not concerned to know ? Shall I be for thee something to become acquainted with, to make thee seek and inquire ? Or shall I not be in thy eyes only a woman, even as those that fatten in a harem ? Dost thou know what is that desire of the soul that time does not assuage, and that no human caress can lull to slumber nor exhaust ? When thy loved one sleeps in thy arms remainest thou awake contemplating her, praying to God and weeping ? Do the pleasures of love leave thee breathless, and brutalised, or do they throw thee into a divine ecstasy ?—I know neither thy past nor thy character, nor what the men that knew thee think of thee. Thou art perchance the best, perchance the worst among them. I love thee without knowing whether I may esteem thee ; I love thee because thou pleasest me ; perhaps I shall be forced to hate thee in a little time."

Dr. Pagello was a tall, fair, robust young man, just turned twenty-seven. His fiery heart had already been kindled several times by amorous adventures, but he was unfamiliar with the language and ideas of the new French Romanticism, and this lyrical monody seemed to him nothing less than an avowal that his budding passion for the strange lady was reciprocated with good measure, pressed down and running over. He had unfortunately never read *Lélia*, or he would have recognised that he was simply being initiated into some of the views of that haughty beauty on the theme of sacred and profane love, to which, in the disenchantment of her last shattered ideal, she was on the point of returning. Pagello had a tender heart but not a brave one, and as he turned restlessly on his couch that night visions of broken troths, of compromised professional career, of the betrayed trust of virtuous parents, made him wakeful. He felt a strong inclination to retreat before it was too late.

In the morning he timidly returned to the Hotel Danieli.

He found his patient better, and the nurse, ready for a well-earned airing, transformed by a brown satin gown, a gracefully draped cashmere shawl and a long, floating ostrich plume, into a Parisian fashion plate. His scruples forgotten, his senses swooning before the *mobilité* of lovely woman, Pagello paced the Riva by her side, carrying her little packages, and listening sympathetically to the life history of *La Sand's* defeated heart, while Alfred was left to take his own medicine for three hours. From this conversation, uttered and grasped under all the difficulties of a foreign accent and idiom, the enamoured physician gathered only one significant fact, that Alfred had thrown over the lovely woman, that she was alone and unhappy in a strange land, that she needed another reed on which to lean. What less could a broad-shouldered, hot-blooded, honourable young man do than offer himself ardently for that mission? Virtuous parents, professional obligations, the tempestuous sister of Daniel Manin, who would certainly pull his hair and tear his best waistcoat in her jealous fury — all were thrown into the canal. Only this wronged, splendid creature, with tears in her velvety eyes, mattered now. He passionately urged her to accept his protection, and more, and she listened not unkindly.

The neurotic and hypersensitive Alfred, who was a prey to hallucinations, felt currents of cold air blowing over his bed that spring morning as he lay alone at the Hotel Danieli, and icy vapours which seemed to proceed from his own tomb. The unhealthy fancies of a convalescent were riveted upon the recollection of an empty tea-cup left standing in the sick-room which to his suspicious eyes bore evidences of having been shared by two pairs of lips. When the little Italian servant brought in the candles for the night, he imagined that he saw upon the wall at the foot of his couch the monstrous shadows of two lovers locked in an embrace.

" Pourquoi non cœur bat-il si vite ?
Qu'ai-je donc en moi que s'agite
Dont je me sens épouvanté ?
Ne frappe t'on pas à ma porte ?
Pourquoi ma lampe à demi-morte
M'éblouit-elle de clarté ?

Dieu puissant, tout mon corps frissonne !
Qui vient ? qui m'appelle ?—Personne." [1]

Later, when fortified by the flood of returning health, Alfred acquainted his nurse with his suspicions and his reaction to them. The scene took place in a café on the

". . . affreux Lido,
Où vient sur l'herbe d'un tombeau
Mourir la pâle Adriatique " [2]

which was vast, desolate and deserted at that season. Alfred opened the charge. The mortal man in him had eclipsed the poet, for the moment. George had betrayed him on the edge of the grave. " If I had known you for what you are," he sneered, " I would have put my money on the chimney-piece the first time I saw you, for you are no better than a *fille !* " In his agitation he had overlooked the fact that it was George's earnings that had financed their *liaison* from the beginning.

" Have I ever been dishonest while I belonged to you ? " George protested. " Can't you see that when you had called me a nun and a day dreamer and the personification of *ennui*, and told me that you no longer loved me, I ceased to belong to you ? What makes a woman vile is a lie. I have never lied to you."

And as they both began to melt under the irresistible logic of this argument, she added :

" Besides, I love you still ; it is purely maternal love, now. As for Pietro, I am not sure yet how I love him ; but I think I love him as a father, and you will be the dear child of us both." Alfred's mind, still very weak after his illness, was not

[1] " Why does my heart beat so fast ?
What is it stirring within me
Of which I feel afraid ?
Are they knocking at my door ?
Why does my lamp that is almost out
Dazzle me with its brilliance ?
Powerful God, my whole body shudders.
Who is there ? Who calls ? No one ! "
Nuit de Mai, de Musset.

[2] " . . . frightful Lido
Where the pale Adriatic
Comes to die on the grass of a grave."
Nuit de Décembre de Musset

equal to the dissection of this involved relationship. His weary shoulders bent under the weight of her ecstatic vision. Her genius was too lofty, her thoughts too vast, for him to follow her yet.

Strange dreams, mysterious revelations, cloud the brain and transfigure reality in that enchanted land of gondolas slow-moving to the rhythm of passionate melodies, of golden-sailed fishing boats floating in the purple bloom of light mist, of tender waves lapping softly the steps of old, sleeping palaces. By their constant reiteration the mystic sophistries of George began to hypnotise the poetic Alfred and he had a vision of the sublime *rôle* that was his in this extraordinary situation. To place the little white hand of his mistress in the hand of the man who had saved his life, and to say, " You love each other and yet you both love me ; you have saved me, body and soul. God bless you both ! " and then to return to Paris, alone, chastened, heartbroken but still loving and still loved—what a magnificent opportunity for a *beau geste*, a living poem ! Let him who never felt as a poet, jest at these rhapsodies. There are such mysteries in these things, and God pushes us in ways so new and unexpected ! Years after, looking back on this episode of her complicated life, George wrote, " This week was perhaps the best in his life. He was in a state of mind in which he never felt himself before. Tenderness had vanquished, penetrated, one might almost say invaded him, entirely." His mistress, it seemed, was strangely exalted in his mind by her conduct, and he felt himself to have been " radically transformed by a mystic contagion that emanated from her—and showed in the midst of his tears a sort of triumphant joy."

The scene is strangely familiar to readers of *La Nouvelle Héloïse ;* Dudevant, Aurélien, Aurore, were an imperfect and abortive foreshadowing of it. The idea had seized Aurore's imagination very early. Corambé would have been entirely capable of such a sacrifice. It was a favourite theme in her novels of this period.

They parted in the Giardino Publico, that little promontory planted in the English style, and frequented by half a dozen melancholy old men, smoking on its damp, mossy benches.

She kissed him three times on the forehead, and Pietro, good-naturedly acquiescing in these mystic rites that he did not comprehend, smiled on them like an indulgent father, and they fled down the chilly, sombre paths, which she watered with her tears.

" Alfred has gone to Paris," she wrote Boucoiran, on the 6th of April ; " We have parted for some months, perhaps for ever. God knows now what will become of my head or my heart ! "

CHAPTER VIII

THE WOUNDED DOVE

" Vers l'automne les chasseurs apportaient à la maison . . . de belles et douces palombes ensanglantées. On me donnait celles qui étaient encore vivantes et j'en prenais soin. . . . A mesure qu'elles reprenaient la force, elles devenaient tristes et s'agitaient dans le cage et se déchiraient aux barreaux. Elles seraient mortes de fatigue et de chagrin si je ne leur eusse données la liberté. . . . Enfin, après bien des hésitations et des efforts, je lui donnais mille baisers, . . . et je la posais sur la fenêtre. Elle restait quelques temps immobile, étonnée, . . . puis elle partait avec un petit cri de joie qui m'allait au cœur. Je la suivais longtemps des yeux ; et quand elle avait disparu derrière les sorbiers du jardin je me mettais à pleurer amèrement."

Lettres d'un Voyageur.[1]

ALFRED, provided by George with funds and an Italian servant for the journey, retraced his steps sadly towards Paris ; not so sadly however, that he could not find heart to stop *en route* at Milan in order to check up his previous impressions of that city. The journey was punctuated with love-notes and sprinkled with tears, but he was comforted by the thought that, although she now had a better lover, she could not possibly have a better brother. And she, also weeping, but hopeful, followed him as far as Vicenza, that she might look upon the place where he had slept the previous night, then donned a blue blouse and cotton trousers, and proceeded, staff in hand, on a walking trip in the Tyrol with Pietro Pagello. She immortalised this expedition in three *Lettres d'un Voyageur*

[1] " Toward autumn the hunters used to bring to the house . . . beautiful and gentle doves, covered with blood. They gave those that were still alive to me and I took care of them. . . . As they began to recover their strength, they became sad and fluttered about their cages and rent their plumage against the bars. They would have died of exhaustion and grief, had I not given them their freedom. . . . At last, after much hesitation and struggle, I kissed one of them a thousand times, I begged it to remember me, . . . and I placed it on the window-sill. It rested there a little while, motionless, astonished, . . . then it departed with a little cry of joy that went to my heart. I followed it with my eyes for a long time ; and when it disappeared behind the trees of the garden, I began to weep bitterly."—*Letters of a Traveller.*

which she sent to Alfred to give to Buloz for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, or to throw into the fire if he thought best. As they were addressed to him, and were personal in tone, under a thin disguise, he certainly had the prior rights. He sent them to Buloz.

George returned from her tour with seven *centesimi* in her pocket. Under these circumstances the Hotel Danieli seemed too expensive, so she moved to cheaper lodgings and then to the first floor of a house near the Campo San Fantino, overlooking the Ponte dei Barcajuoli, a part of Venice frequented by artists, as it was near the theatres. Pietro and his brother Giulio, an officer in the Marines, leased the floor above and a young woman named Giulia Puppati, who had the face of an angel and the voice of a nightingale, shared George's rooms and reduced her expenses. Some evil-minded persons in Venice professed to be scandalised at this mixed family ; they pretended that Signorina Puppati was the mistress of one or both of the Pagellos, but they were misinformed, for she was merely their clandestine sister and had come to Venice to attend to an *affaire de cœur* with quite another person.

George's versatility was at once taxed to adorn the third *nid d'amour* that she had prepared in as many years, and literature ceded to the necessities of domestic life until she could brighten up the rather scanty furnishings of the Pagellos. She covered chairs and made curtains, and she knit socks for Pietro, and learned to cook artichokes, which furnished the *pièce de résistance* of their frugal meals. Alfred had prophesied that her last love would be the most beautiful ; it was true, she wrote him, for she had forgotten the name of suffering. Pagello crowned her with stars, and his tenderness and faithfulness were balm to her bruised heart.

These austere economies warranted the luxury of a gondola, and during the stifling summer evenings, while they glided over the quiet lagoons whispering of " our love for Alfred," Pagello composed a charming barcarolle comparing her to Venus riding the waves in a scallop shell. Towards morning, when the heated marbles of the palaces began to cool off, they sought a little terrace restaurant where, by the light of paper lanterns, they ate sole garnished with currants and pine-seeds,

washed down with the wine of Braganza. When they passed under the arch of the sombre arcade of the Bridge of Sighs George thought pensively of Byron and Alfred. A little lamp at the end of a mysterious and melancholy canaletto which was reflected in a thousand points of light on the glistening marble palace of Bianca Capello, reminded her of how Alfred had ridiculed her for fancying she saw cascades of sparks and spirits of fire dancing in crystal grottoes beneath the venerable walls. She pointed it out to Pietro but he shrugged his shoulders sceptically. " I don't care for such fantastic ideas. That sort of thing comes from the Germans and is entirely contrary to Italian conceptions of beauty. Dream away, if you like ; I prefer to contemplate." A shadow across the moon ! Her soul was alone again !

Inspired by the events of these sad but beautiful months, George wrote *Jacques*, a variation of the ill-assorted-marriage theme, turned wrong side out this time. Jacques was a nobly unselfish husband, convinced of the sinfulness of trying to compel his young wife's affections. He handed her over to her lover without a murmur, and thus helped to form one of those edifying triangles of satisfied souls, about which George's imagination was always hovering. She sent Alfred the manuscript, in order that he might correct the punctuation and make the chapter divisions ; he must not feel that he had no longer any part in her work. " I give myself to you to do as you please with in literature, but there is nothing of *us* in this novel." She always buried her head in the sand, when she was afraid she had held up the glass to history too frankly.

George entered on a campaign with Pagello to keep Alfred on the straight and narrow path. His illness, it appeared, had purified his body and soul. In fact, he was so renewed that he assured them they would find a corpse in his bed at the Danieli, if they looked in it. He had burst his chrysalis, George told him, and his best work was before him, provided he would keep away from wine and women for a time, at least. " Whenever you feel tempted," added Pagello, " remember the little tube of gum-arabic that I gave you when you were so sick, and I wager you will keep straight ! " In order to encourage him, they proposed that Pagello should translate his poems

into Italian, and sent for copies of all his verses, those magic verses that had first drawn her to him from another world. At the same time she requested that he send her two pairs of black satin shoes, twelve pairs of gloves, cigarette papers, the Beethoven symphonies and a quart of Patchouly. Alfred responded with notes as " chaste and sweet as the prayers of a child." He was still under the Venetian spell, and floated quite naturally into the mystic vocabulary of *Werther* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, masterpieces he had formerly affected to despise.

" I love you, I know you are beside a man who loves you and yet I am at peace ! " he said, astonished at his own serenity. " The tears fall abundantly on my hands while I write you but they are the sweetest, most precious tears I have ever shed. So many things have passed through this poor head. From what a strange dream I am awaking. And you too, are reborn. You love ; you are beautiful ; you are young ; you walk under the loveliest sky in the world, supported by a man who is worthy of you. Tell him I love him. Respect my *amitié* (this word that was so hard worked in the vocabulary of George and her friends !), which is more ardent than love. It is all there is good in me. It is the work of God. You are the thread that binds me to Him."

The poor, bedraggled little butterfly, so weak and crumpled from his lately discarded chrysalis, flapped his radiant new wings bravely to dry them, and spouted romantic extravagances in letters to his two benefactors which they read tearfully, side by side, pressing each other's hands sympathetically the while.

" Oh, why," sobbed George, with her head on Pagello's shoulder, " can't I live between you two and make you both happy, without belonging to either of you ? "

* * * * *

The harmony between external nature and the dispositions of the spirit is at all times difficult to preserve. Even under the most beautiful sky in the world, the dull realities of existence have a disconcerting habit of raising their stupid heads and staring us in the face. One of the dullest and most disturbing is the lack of money.

George had worked at her manuscript with her usual conscientious regularity, ever since her return to Venice, writing

seven or eight hours a day in spite of the heat and the distractions of her heart. Beautiful, fair, even sheets they were, with scarcely an erasure or correction, which she gave to Pagello to post, without even stopping to re-read them. *Jacques*, *André*, *Léone Leoni*, all inspired by the enchanting Italian sunshine, had been fed into the maw of Buloz in rapid succession, but no answering checks from *La Revue des Deux Mondes* relieved the strained financial situation of the little *ménage* in the Campo San Fantino. August was approaching, and the date of the closing exercises at Maurice's school, at which his mother had promised to be present. George haunted the post office ; she dispatched frantic letters to Paris—to Buloz, to Alfred, who was too exhausted by his preparations for migration to Aix and by his gentle melancholy, to bestir himself in such prosaic interests ; to Hippolyte, who was indifferent ; to the faithful Boucoiran, who was strangely apathetic and did not reply. She even considered appealing to the discarded Planche to make a raid on her mysteriously silent editors. Horrible fears began to torment her and mar the beauty of the evenings in the gondola. Her manuscripts had been lost ! Buloz was a rascal ! Boucoiran had fallen in love ! Maurice was sick, perhaps dead ! Her friends had cast her off !

Dr. Pagello was obliged to pawn his clothes in order to get money for her daily six cups of coffee, indispensable to a foreigner who attempted to live in that enervating climate, and for other no less imperative needs. Poor amiable Pietro had his own troubles too. His affair with the much observed foreign lady occasioned much comment at Florian's and more scandal than agreed with his budding professional standing ; and to make matters worse a succession of excited and outraged young ladies, whose pretensions to his affections had suffered an eclipse since George's enthronement, besieged his home, attacked his person, and menaced his very life.

The situation was complicated by symptoms that Alfred was falling from grace. His unstable temperament had sustained itself on the heights of mysticism as long as it could. He was swiftly sliding back into the cynical and despondent moods that George knew only too well. She had harped too loudly on the string of Pagello's noble generosity. Jealousy rushed

in with the tide of returning health and in the clear, prosaic atmosphere of his old Paris haunts, Alfred, in consultation with his friend Tattet, mistrusted that when he joined the hands of those who had " saved him, body and soul " he had been fooled into playing an absurd part in a comedy. He discovered that his memory needed to be refreshed on the significance of certain fugitive impressions connected with the initial period of George's relations with Pagello—the teacup, the shadows on the wall. He indelicately strove to snatch the veil from private matters on which the considerate " *Jacques* " would never have intruded.

When at last the missing checks were discovered in a forgotten drawer at the Venice Post Office, where a languid clerk had overlooked them for two months, they brought no real joy to George's drooping spirits. For the beautiful poem had faded into a myth. It had been shattered by Alfred's announcement that he was " drowned in love, dying of love, knees shaking, sight gone ! "

" I must be yours, it is my destiny ! I love you, oh my flesh and bones ! "

" Since you cannot be cured, we must never meet again ! " she replied, distractedly.

But there again, was Maurice's school commencement approaching, and here was the check to pay her debts, and no excuse for a longer delay in Venice ! The last of July she started for Paris, and Pietro, faint yet pursuing, burnt his bridges in Venice and incontinently sold all his possessions to obtain funds for the journey, reserving a few paintings to be sold in Paris.

* * * * *

George arrived the fifteenth of August, three days before the distribution of prizes at the Lycée Henri Quatre. In the intervening fortnight she had visited the Italian lakes, crossed the Simplon, climbed Mont Blanc, and got a sunstroke on her nose. She had covered most of the three hundred leagues on foot, in her peasant's blouse and breeches. The last miasmic vapours of the lagoons had been dispelled by the pure air of the mountains, and Pietro, in the passage through Switzerland, had lost his aureole. As they advanced their relations gradu-

ally became more circumspect, even cold. He was required to play up to the unwelcome *rôle* of *amitié*, but it was not in the Italian repertoire and he failed miserably. At Paris, the company disbanded. George could not comprehend what had happened ; " Pietro, who understood everything in Venice, the moment he set foot in Paris, no longer understands. Faith is dead ; *ergo*, Love is dead." Alfred too had broken faith. He was hastening back to Paris, and demanding an interview and explanations. He, also, no longer understood. " Is there, then, such a thing as ideal love ? Am I doomed to be always clasping phantoms and chasing shadows ? " And in this discouraged frame of mind she attended the closing exercises of her son's school, had a brief and stormy interview with Alfred, and fled to Nohant.

Her reception by Casimir was not effusive. He took no interest in her travels or her opinions of the Italian people, and was even rude and ugly when she attempted to discuss them with her old friends. For they all flocked loyally about her again—Duvernet and Fleury, both recently married, but none the less hers, Duteil and Papet ; they tried to cheer her up by the old familiar jokes and capers that she always relished. Duteil, in his rough coat and purple cap, drinking toasts out of his neighbour's goblet, and unconsciously composing a Teniers picture, roared out Berrichon drinking songs in a voice that shook the window frames. Polyte played the dancing bear, while Fleury, stretched on the floor at her feet, played a jig on the tongs with the shovel for a bow, and Charles Duvernet, skipping about like a gnome, watched his chance to pour a glass of water down someone's sleeve, or trip up one of the dancers. They brought their wives and sisters-in-law too, which was the best proof of their loyalty in adversity. Aurore was deeply touched, but her gaiety was all on the surface. Brave, steadfast hearts, all of them ; so closely bound together and so sympathetic, but so inexperienced in the kind of grief that consumes exalted souls like hers ! When they left her, she reopened Mme. de Staël's " Reflections on Suicide." To Rollinat only, as they walked her shady garden paths, she recounted her long, sad pilgrimage. She knew that she could live only a short time now. She saw the shadow of an early

death across her path;—and in a few weeks she was back in Paris, and she and Alfred were re-united; but it was no longer a triangle.

It was not *amour* now, either! It was miserable passion, and the days passed in convulsions, tortures, recriminations, reconciliations. All the gamut of romantic terminology was utilised for the rehearsal of their love and hate. It was a terrible thing to be young and a poet in the eighteen-thirties! In November Alfred cast her off, and she fled from him again, but not too far away. He had predicted that she would not have the courage to really leave him; she found that in spite of everything, she still loved with all her soul. The glacial aisles of St. Sulpice, where they met with flaming hearts and chattering teeth, heard their prayers and curses and their tears. She passed her nights weeping over an impassioned journal she was keeping for her poet, and her days in discussing her grief with her friends. She told it to Delacroix, while posing to him for a portrait for *La Revue des Deux Mondes;* for of what else could she speak, if not of Alfred? Delacroix gave her his choicest cigarettes to smoke, and advised her to fight against her love; it would become exhausted and leave her. She told it to the beautiful and spiritual young Franz Liszt (of whom Alfred was unreasonably jealous), and he reproved her. Only God, he said, was worthy of being loved as she loved. But Liszt had not at that time experienced earthly passion. She told it to the cynical Heinrich Heine, and he assured her that the heart counted very little in love, which was merely a matter of the brain or the senses. She consulted Mme. Hortense Allart des Méritens, who had had so many lovers, beginning with the elderly Châteaubriand, that she could scarcely remember them all herself. Mme. Allart insisted that the only way to manage a man was to pretend to be angry with him; George had no skill at stratagem. Only the angelic Sainte-Beuve gave her any comfort. To her question, "What is love?" he replied gently, "It is grief; you weep, therefore you love." But he was severe too, and exhorted her to give up haunting Alfred's door on the rue Grenelle, and beseeching him to love her on her bended knees. She must resume her writing and find new interests.

The battles of these distinguished lovers furnished a piquant

topic for witty conversation in famous salons, like that of Delphine Gay, and in intimate gatherings of kindred souls. But George cared not for the speech of people ; all that worried her was the continued disaffection of Alfred, his false accusations, and his fearful despair. She returned to Nohant, where she continued to weep for his blue eyes, his white shoulders, his beautiful blond head, and to wonder how her children would feel when she was dead. Her faithful *bonne*, Sophie, who was sometimes obliged to share her vigils, suffered too. Then George made a last appeal ; she cut off all her splendid curls, and sent them to him. He sent her a lock of his fine blond hair in return.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, Dr. Pagello, living disconsolately at the Hôtel d'Orléans on a franc and a half a day, sat with his head in his hands and reflected on the curious mental aberrations of French genius. George had not neglected this symbol of a shattered ideal completely. She had dispatched her henchman, Boucoiran, to take him to Buloz, and try to interest that mighty man in getting Pagello improving opportunities for study in the hospitals. Boucoiran bore some belated chapters of *Jacques* with him as a peace-offering.

" Then she has come back ? " said Buloz, casting an inquiring glance at the Italian, who was examining some of the pictures on his office wall. " How long ago ? "

" Two days."

" This devil of a woman will drive me mad. I have waited a whole month for this manuscript." Then, at a furtive hint from Boucoiran, he took in the situation. He produced theatre passes and gracefully shouldered the burden that George laid down. Boucoiran was indefatigable too, and from the sale of his paintings, of which the noble de Musset relieved him for two thousand francs, Pagello was able to buy medical books and a case of instruments, so that he spent the winter more profitably than at first seemed possible. He firmly declined, however, the invitation from M. Dudevant, which George sent him through Boucoiran, to pass a week at Nohant ! His farewell was said when she returned to the Quai Malaquais, and as the watch-dog Boucoiran was present, it was mercifully mute. As when Lélia parted from Sténio, her " pallid and cold lips "

seemed to cry out, " Leave me, I no longer love you ! " So Pagello went back to Venice to the neglected patients, and the furious inamoratas who awaited him there, and specialised in orthopedics, obstetrics and insanity, grew deaf, married twice, and lived happily to a ripe age of ninety-two without once uttering a word of reproach or trying to explain his adventure to a curious public. As for George, knowing that it is in no man's power to change his temperament, or to make the nervous constitution prevail over the sanguine, or the bilious over the lymphatic, she held no grudge against Pietro for having forgotten his part. She believed that each man's conduct was largely due to his physical organisation, and in her life of independence and social isolation she looked only at the heart that underlay the thoughts and serious sentiments. Besides, she was too much occupied with her troubles now to think of his. God had made her gentle, but proud ; now her pride was broken. Paradise might be lost, but why lose Alfred too ? His divine profile constantly stood between her and her good resolutions ; she must have him at any cost. " Bah, *vive l'amour* all the same ! " In January she was again his mistress, and the odious scenes and mad embraces began all over again. In March, Boucoiran was summoned to assist her to escape without Alfred's knowledge. Ten days later she was back at Nohant and exorcising the unhealthy passions, which God had given her for better uses, by a liberal course of Benjamin Franklin. Alfred's last letter was interred in a skull, and she wrote Liszt that it was possible that life held something else besides Love.

" My God," she wrote Alfred, in her farewell letter. " What a life I am leaving you to ! Drunkenness, wine, women ! " He, whom she had wanted to set upon the throne of the world !

This " young man with the splendid past " did not mourn as one who had no hope. There were plenty of young ladies waiting to fall into his arms. But before he finished completely with the supreme climax of his emotional experiences, he was impelled to raise a monument to its heroine. " Thou wilt not lie in the cold earth without its learning what it bears. Only spotless lilies will grow on your tomb. People will speak of us as of Romeo and Juliette, and Eloïse and Abélard—never

one without the other. Our marriage will be more sacred than those of priests—the imperishable union of two intelligences, and I will end its history with my hymn of love." So with this lofty purpose he wrote *La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*, to show that a man given to vice is incapable of breaking away from it, or of appreciating the woman he loves at her true value. He sent it to George with a dedication, and she recognised the faithful portrayal of each detail of their liaison, and wept as she closed the book. But she waited until Alfred was dead to write her version of the story. "*Elle et Lui*" did not put spotless lilies on Alfred's tomb; his friends thought her own aureole shone rather too brightly in this romance, and that the hymn of love was answered by a *miserere*. But in the years that had elapsed since Alfred erected her monument, he had pulled up the spotless lilies and planted the deadly nightshade in their place. George found it hard to forgive the magnificent *Nuit d'Octobre*, in which he charged the *femme à l'œil sombre* with having cast a sinister shadow over his springtime and his *beaux jours* by her "fatal amours." But these are things between two lovers of which they alone can judge.

Ferme tes yeux, tes bras, ton âme;
Adieu, ma vie,—adieu, Madame.
Ainsi va le monde içi-bas.

. . . . .

Le Temps emporte sur son aile
Et le printemps et l'hirondelle,
Et la vie et les jours perdus;
Tout s'en va, comme la fumée,
L'espérance et la renommée,
Et moi qui vous ai tant aimée,
Et toi qui n'en souviens plus.[1]

À Juana. A. de Musset.

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[1] "Close thine eyes, thine arms, thy heart;
Adieu, my life,—adieu, Madame.
Thus the world goes, here below.

. . . . .

Time bears away upon its wing
Both the springtime and the swallow,
And our life and our lost days;
All passes, like the smoke,
Hope and renown,
And I, who have loved thee so,
And thou, who no longer rememberest me.

To Juana. A. de Musset.

CHAPTER IX

EVERARD OF THE BALD PATE

"*Comme je marchais vite, et regardais peu à terre, il m'arrivait de me heurter contre une pierre et de tomber. . . . Mais me relevant vite et pensant que personne ne m'avait vu, je continuais en me disant :* Ceci est un accident, la fatalités s'en est mêlée ; . . . *Mais je me heurtai encore et je tombai souvent. Un jour je m'aperçus que j'étais tout blessés, tout sanglant, et que non équipage, crotté et déchiré, faisait rire les passants, d'autant plus que je le portais encore d'un air majestueux. . . . Alors je fus forcé de m'asseoir sur une pierre au bord du chemin, et je me mis tristement à regarder mes haillons et mes plaies . . . et je repris ma route en boîtant et en tombant.*"[1]

Lettres d'un Voyageur.

One morning in October, 1835, M. François Rollinat was surprised to see Mme. Dudevant walk into his office, accompanied by her friend, Dr. Gustave Papet, in a state of suppressed excitement.

"Casimir has broken his agreement with me again," she said quietly.

"There was the devil of a row night before last, when we all got back from hunting," broke in Papet, "because Aurore wanted more cream for Maurice's coffee. Casimir tried to put them both out of the house, and he fetched his gun from the hall-closet, and would have killed her if Duteil hadn't wrested it out of his hand."

[1] "As I walked fast and did not look much at the ground, I happened to stumble against a stone and fall. . . . But, picking myself up again quickly, and thinking that no one had seen me, I went on, saying to myself, 'That was an accident; fatality had something to do with it.' But I stumbled again, and I fell often. One day I perceived that I was hurt, bleeding, and that my plight, muddy and tattered as I was, made the passers-by laugh, the more so as I still had my majestic manner. . . . Then I had to sit down on a stone at the side of the road, and I began to look sadly at my rags and my wounds . . . and I went on my way again, limping and falling."—*Letters of a Traveller.*

" What did you say to him, Aurore ? "

" I said, ' I am in my own house,' and he said, ' We will see who is master here.' Then he seized my arm, and tried to box my ears, but Fleury and Bourgoing came to my rescue. Then I left the room, taking Maurice with me."

" But he had been drinking, as usual, I suppose ? "

" No, he was sober, but he told Duteil afterwards that when he was in a rage he did not know what he was doing, and would even have boxed *his* ears instead of mine, if occasion arose."

" Now, see here, Rollinat," Papet broke in, " Aurore can't continue to live this way. If Casimir can't be trusted to keep these agreements that he is always signing, he must be forced by law to clear out altogether. He knows that Aurore is ready to give up half of her property to him if he will only let her have Nohant and the children."

" And where is he now ? " Rollinat asked.

" Gone to Paris with Maurice and Solange, to put them in school," replied Mme. Dudevant. " You know how poor little Maurice dreads those vast, draughty dismal corridors of the Lycée, and he is always in tears when he has to go away from me. With Solange it is different. I confess she is too much for me to cope with, and she is much better off at the pension Martin, where they understand her, and can make her obey. But Maurice is so gentle, and he adores me so ! Besides, he has rheumatic tendencies that worry me. Papet thinks he has a weak heart ; he needs tender care. But my ideas about my children are never consulted or noticed. Their mother is not a proper person to be entrusted with their training, it seems."

The beautiful eyes were bright with tears for a moment ; then she added gaily, " I gave them a frolic yesterday. We had a jolly picnic at Vavray, and the precious *mioches* forgot all their troubles and their fright of the night before and were as happy as kittens. When we got home, Casimir was in bed, so I have not seen him since the Great Scene."

Rollinat meditated. " I think," he said, " that the time has come, Aurore, for the lawyers to settle your affairs for you. Of course, when you keep away from home, all goes smoothly, for all Casimir wants is to keep your money and be let alone.

But the moment you come back to Nohant the quarrels begin. You can't, in justice to yourself or your children, go on this way any longer. In spite of our cruel laws of dower, Nohant belongs to you by all the ties of tradition and affection ; it must be yours by the decision of the courts."

" Casimir has no love for Nohant," put in Papet. " It is merely a question of money with him ; he grows more miserly every year. But he is such a weak, vacillating fellow, that he listens to everyone who offers him any advice, and for my part, I believe that Hippolyte Chatiron, quite as much as the Baronne Dudevant, or that meddlesome, unnatural mother of Aurore's, is secretly responsible for his backing out of every settlement that Aurore has persuaded him to agree to."

" Oh, Polyte ! never ! " cried Mme. Dudevant. " Polyte is my staunch friend, even when he is drunk. A rough peasant, if you please, but such a loyal, lovable soul ! "

" This is bound to be a very delicate affair to handle," said Rollinat judicially, " Casimir might easily make things disagreeable for Aurore, especially if he has had advice and becomes ugly. He ought not to be allowed to fight the case. I would like to talk it over with my father, who is so much more experienced than I."

" Fleury is urging me to see Michel about it, and while you are talking it over with your father, I will go to Bourges to consult him," said Mme. Dudevant.

All agreed that if Michel de Bourges would consent to take the case, her suit would be successful. No advocate in all Berry could prevail against his keen brains and eloquent tongue. The brilliant defender of the twenty-two Republicans held responsible for the industrial riots of 1834 was already celebrated in the annals of French contemporary history. Unfortunately, at the moment, he was paying the penalty of his excessive zeal as a leader of the proletariate, in the town jail of Bourges.

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The orbit of the celebrated Republican lawyer whose name Mme. Dudevant had uttered so casually in Rollinat's office, had already impinged upon her own much more significantly than her Berrichon friends suspected. She had, indeed, every

reason to believe that he would not be a disinterested participator in her efforts to free herself and Nohant from this miserly and vacillating Dudevant. Six months before she and Papet sought Rollinat's council, she had written to Hippolyte :

" I have made the acquaintance of Michel, who seems to me to be a fellow of solid temper, of the calibre of which a tribune of the people is made. If there should be a change of government, I am sure he will be found in the first ranks."

Her old friend Planet, who had been converted to Michel's political ideas while running a newspaper at Bourges which Michel directed, had presided at her presentation to the Great Man, who, among other titles to distinction, added that of being an admirer of *Lélia*. Planet believed that Michel would be able to revive Aurore's interest in public affairs, and bring her out of the lethargy in which the final convulsions of her Venetian romance had left her. George was then contemplating a trip to the Orient to escape from the babble of tongues and the tedium of life. She had even applied for her passport; but she consented to go to Bourges with Fleury, who was curious to hear what Michel had to say about the political situation. Democracy was the absorbing topic just then, as Liberty had been the watchword in 1830. No one could illuminate this subject more intelligently than Michel.

Destiny sometimes conducts us inexorably to places where some great moral crisis is to take place within us !

Arrived at Bourges, they dined with Planet at the inn, and Michel was duly notified of the presence of Lélia. As soon as he could dispose of his evening meal with the wife of his bosom and his adopted son, he hastened to pay his respects to the celebrated novelist. The success of the meeting far exceeded Planet's expectations. It lasted from seven in the evening until four in the morning, and was a *véritable éblouissement*, quite dazzling for all concerned. The conversation, or more properly speaking, the monologue of the eloquent advocate, was directed almost exclusively to Lélia, but it was not her private sorrows that furnished his theme, but rather her fundamental ideas and principles, which were shown to be narrow and egotistical, and required to be developed and directed to worthy objects. Under the warmth of her atten-

tive receptivity the orator expanded. He leaped from thought to thought and from world to world with astonishing agility. His discourse flowed on like a majestic river, raising his hearers to celestial meditations and then bearing them back to earth once more without jolt or jar. As his fervour waxed under the enchantment of those great solemn eyes mutely fixed upon him, he drew from the pocket of his rough, thick overcoat one huge silk handkerchief after another (immaculate and very fine in quality, George observed), knotted the corners with his lean, nervous fingers into a cap to cover his bald head, then dropped them absent-mindedly to the floor until he had a little pile of them beside him.

George was fresh from researches in the science of phrenology, conducted by a physician from the hospital for the insane. She was spellbound by the extraordinary development of Michel's polished skull. In fact he appeared to have, not one, but two heads, welded, one back of the other, in the form of a ship, with the bumps denoting the high faculties of mind at the prow, and the knobs indicating the tender instincts of heart in the poop. To sustain this monstrous summit the foundations were alarmingly frail. A small, thin, stooping figure, gaunt and hollow-chested, with a pale, seamed, bilious face. His near-sighted eyes beamed humorously and not unkindly through hideous, thick spectacles. He bore the marks of a man who has struggled from poverty to fame by dint of every possible deprivation and hardship. He looked twice his age, which was thirty-seven. George's maternal and protective instincts were aroused at the sight of such fragility united to such power. Her phrenological zeal burned to discover whether the peculiarities of his organisation were absolute and fatalistic, or accidental and dependent upon interior and remediable causes. If so, could she be of assistance? As she pondered upon the outer and inner constitution of this interesting specimen, an old Tyrolean song that she had heard during her walking-trip in the Brenta, kept running through her head:

> "Vers les monts du Tyrol, poursuivant les chamois,
> Engelwald au front chauve a passé sur la neige." [1]

[1] "Towards the heights of the Tyrol, chasing the chamois, Engelwald of the bald head has passed over the snow."

It was a magnificent moonlight night in spring. When, toward midnight, the guest prepared to depart and they accompanied him to the door, Michel proposed to show them the picturesque parts of the old town ; in the moonlight they would be very effective. In pursuit of the Beautiful, however, he did not abate his zeal for the True ; and as his eloquence was still soaring when they reached his home, he accompanied them back to the inn. This process was continued until dawn surprised them in their ninth transit in front of the splendid old house of Jacques Cœur, and so exalted and buoyant were the spirits of the entire party that none of them was conscious of the least fatigue. " Never have I seen him like this before ! " exclaimed Planet, when the performance at last closed and the curtain had dropped ; " it was as if he was for the first time wholly revealed to himself."

Fleury was not so enthusiastic. His morning slumbers were disturbed by horrible dreams suggested, probably, by the boldness of Michel's views concerning the usefulness of the guillotine. He was seized with a secret dread lest he had been conversing amicably with a future red-handed dictator, and listening to the detestable doctrines of Babœuf presented in specious but dangerous arguments by this golden-tongued orator. The horses could not be put into the post-chaise quickly enough to satisfy his impatience to be away from Bourges before Michel could appear to them again, and to put miles between Mme. Dudevant and Engelwald of the Bald Pate, lest her mobile mind be impregnated with the seeds of fanaticism. George had a great need of repose after the torrents of Michel's eloquence, and of silence to meditate in the healing morning air, sweet with apple-blossoms, on the import of what she had heard. But the " Gaulois " gave her no peace, and the eighteen hours between Bourges and La Châtre was passed in listening to Fleury as he punctured all Michel's dazzling arguments.

Michel was astonished and pained at their flight. Scarcely had George reached home, when a letter arrived, written in such an illegible hand, and so crammed with undeveloped ideas, that she devoted half a day to deciphering and considering it. Other letters followed. This ardent soul was bent upon conquest !

"Your letters have a magical effect upon me," she replied. "They make me serious. In vain I struggle. I cannot speak of you indifferently, as I do of everyone else."

She decided not to use her passport for the East. Everard (she had baptised him with a French version of the name of the intrepid bald-headed Alpine hunter) strongly disapproved of her journey.

Like M. Delatouche, Everard discovered that she was very ignorant, but had all the ambition that characterises uncultivated and sentimental minds—women's minds, in short! All souls have sex, and hers was extremely feminine. She wanted to get God's truth too quickly—was too impatient to know everything. "Quick, quick! Give God's secret to M. George Sand, who will not wait!" Everard undertook to impart the qualities her mind required in order to receive the Truth as he saw it. The method proved rather brutal in the end, although it began quite harmlessly with the ideas of "Poor Richard's Almanack," of which George was already a zealous but unenlightened admirer. All his leisure moments in Paris, whither he came soon after their meeting for the great trial of the imprisoned Republicans, were consecrated to administering gradually increased doses of virility to his promising pupil.

"I see plainly that your mental errors spring from the sufferings of your heart," he said. "Love is a self-centred emotion. Extend this burning, devouring passion of yours, which will never find in this world the thing it is seeking, to suffering humanity about you. Do not waste all this tenderness on a single being; no one person is worth it. But all together demand it in the name of the eternal author of creation. Broaden that insatiable pursuit of your own individual liberty, then, until it comprehends social liberty and equality."

All this sounded very noble and inspiring to George, and she set to work at once to broaden. She had always believed that if she could be dominated by a strong soul she could be saved. Sandeau and Musset were neither of them strong souls. She had made a bad choice at first and, in her discouragement, had resolved to be more cautious in the future and to keep to the middle of the road, taking no further liberty with abysses. On

the strong arm of Michel she began to feel bold again. For such a man she could become a source of joy and pride. In abandoning herself to his leadership, imperious though it was, she was sure that she was at last on the right track ; she was serving an *idea*, not a passion. The Idea, to be sure, often demanded sacrifices of traditions and preconceptions that were exceedingly painful.

" Civilisation ! " shouted Everard, derisively, striking his cane against the railing of the Saints Pères Bridge (it was midnight, and they were returning from the Théâtre Français, and had paused to watch the carriages rolling up to the palace of the Tuilleries, which was brilliantly illumined for a ball). " Yes, that is a favourite word with you artists ! I tell you that in order to rejuvenate and renew your corrupt society, this beautiful river must run red with blood ; this accursed palace must become a desert where the working-man will drive his plough and build his hut ! "

George glanced around uneasily lest this appeal to the " torch and the poignard " might attract the notice of a guardian of the peace. Equality of property !—a pretty phrase, which she had often used effectively, but it bristled with ugly possibilities when defined in its unadorned actuality. It is so difficult to entirely eliminate personal considerations and inherited prejudices from one's humanitarian schemes for justice and equality.

Under the influence of Everard the very air she breathed in her attic on Quai Malaquais was changed. Her old friends, " the artists," of whom he was so contemptuous, still came there in the daytime, but her evenings belonged to Everard and his Republican friends. Every night they dined together in a quiet little restaurant and strolled about the streets afterwards, trying to hear what the proletarians were saying about the great fight that was splitting the Republican party. As a rule they were saying very little—much less eager to make the Seine run red, she privately thought, than Michel had led her to suppose. George had found it convenient to resume masculine attire, and was smuggled into some of the sessions at the Luxembourg where the air was tense with the struggle between Louis Philippe's ministers and the men of Michel's

stamp. Michel attempted to train her as a political writer, and gave her a chance to serve humanity by composing an attack on the Government, by which he proposed to sustain the wavering resolution of the imprisoned Republicans who had elected him as their defender. But, like Sandeau when she attempted to write *Rose et Blanche* for him, he found her style too sentimental and refined.

" These men don't need encouragement, but to be put in a rage," he cried. " The country must be attacked ; the whole republican division must be stirred up ! "

So he threw away Mme. Sand's lady-like manifesto, and wrote another in his own style, which upset his entire party and brought him a summons to appear before the Chamber of Peers, " alive or dead."

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It was to the old feudal castle of the Duke of Burgogne, now converted into a jail, in which Michel was serving his sentence of one month, that George and her two Berrichon friends directed their steps after the conference in Rollinat's office. Although they had reached Bourges late at night, after fifteen hours in a rickety cabriolet, they succeeded in gaining access at once to his quarters.

Michel advised a rapid flank movement to take Casimir by surprise before over-zealous friends could interpose. He also prescribed the temporary abandonment of Nohant to the enemy and a stragetical occupation of La Châtre, centre of all the gossip, with the home of Casimir's friend, Alexis Duteil, as headquarters. " You must live henceforth in a glass house," he insisted.

M. and Mme. Duteil had been the unwilling witnesses of so many disagreeable scenes between the Dudevants that they were doubtless relieved to be able to offer the desired hospitality at the price of exemption from testimony in the courts. The sojourn in the glass house proved delightfully social and lively. The modest little home, already crowded to the limit by the presence of Duteil's sister and brother-in-law with their seven children, was now stretched to receive a constant stream of Mme. Dudevant's La Châtre friends—the Duvernets, Fleurys, Papet and Planet, who spent their evenings there.

In spite of the dark little winding street in the heart of the town where her "poetic soul flapped its wings vainly" in the depressing provincial atmosphere, George's childlike gaiety revived in the company of so many young people; it was almost as in the agreeable days of the genial Duplessis family. Charades, dancing to the strains of Duteil's violin, improvised *bals masqués* every night. The strain on the nerves of Mme. Duteil was severe, for she was an invalid, and could not in any case have experienced the same *élan* of hospitality towards the dangerous Lélia as her husband. But a quiet time always came at last when, the guests departed and the children all tucked in bed, George's little work-table and supper were brought out. She wrote till daylight, to the accompaniment of the hungry cries of the trained animals of a circus troupe, whose winter quarters were under her window.

She was writing a novel in three volumes, to be entitled *Engelwald*. Its hero and its politics were, of course, Republican, and for various reasons it seemed prudent to withhold it from publication until after her divorce suit should be decided. Buloz, who had paid for it in advance, growled at the delay; but the *Revue des Deux Mondes* never knew *Engelwald*. Owing to later developments he perished in the flames.

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In February, the Court, having listened to the testimony of seventeen servants and friends of Mme. Dudevant (among whom was the tried and faithful Boucoiran), who all agreed as to the unpleasant habits and ignoble tastes of her husband, rendered a decision in favour of the plaintiff. Dudevant made no plea. Nohant at last was hers once more! Before Casimir, who had already resigned his office as mayor of the little hamlet and abandoned Nohant for Paris, should arrive for the final liquidation of their affairs, she rushed home to enjoy her legal ownership in solitude. The servants were all gone; only her grandmother's old gardener and his wife still remained in a little building at the back of the court. The romance of her solitary possession enchanted her. Ghosts might walk in upon her at any moment; ghosts of a time long past!

When the gardener's wife had removed the remains of her dinner and left the house, Aurore closed and barred the outside

doors, rearranged the furniture in the lower rooms exactly as they had been on the night when the little church bell had tolled the knell of Mme. Dupin's departing soul, lighted all the candles she could find, and threw open the communicating doors between the long series of rooms that extended across the garden side of the mansion. Then she promenaded the entire length of the empty apartments, from her grandmother's little boudoir, in which she used to hide herself away from the revelry of Casimir and Hippolyte in communion with the absent Aurélien, through the long grey-panelled dining-room whose glass doors opened on the terrace, now buried in snow, to the great salon where a bright fire burned, and where her own solitary little figure was reflected like a pale phantom in the great gilt mirrors. She fancied that the spectres of her dead ancestors, who gazed down at her fraternally from their Louis Seize frames, were descending to tiptoe about with her in the wavering light of the burnt-out candles, and as the fire on the hearth gave a dying leap she thought she saw old Deschartres in his wig and gaiters, whisk through a distant door. Thus was the home-coming of a Romanticist!

But her triumph was of brief duration. The news came that Dudevant had thrown off his torpor and was preparing to fight the Courts. Some enemy had done this! Aurore flew back to her glass cage. Never had she realised so clearly that the causes of the fragility of the marriage pact were traceable to the cruelty of the law.

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For the vicissitudes of this divorce suit George referred her friends, who wrote for news, to the official publications of the Department of the Indre. As the summer solstice approached, she fled from the hot, narrow noisy streets of La Châtre to the simple home of the Bourgoings on the ancient ramparts of the town, under the great square towers of the old Château de Lombault. Here were old gables shrouded with fragrant honeysuckle vines, and a little garden full of roses, and a view of her beloved Indre winding dark and peaceful through the green fields of the *Vallée Noire*. A small bedroom, furnished with a real peasant's bed with red cotton curtains, two straw-bottomed chairs and a wooden table, furnished an appro-

(*Musée Carnavalet*)

DUPIN DE FRANCUEIL, GRANDFATHER OF GEORGE SAND

priate setting in which to put herself in harmony with the working-man's point of view. Her room opened upon a little paved terrace where her meals were served, and from which she enjoyed an uninterrupted view of the domestic life of the cockchafers and red-throats in the trees that hung over it, and of the constellations that climbed the midnight sky. Six feet of trellis on the fruit wall below her window furnished a convenient ladder upon which to descend after dark, without disturbing the other inmates of the house, for nocturnal rambles on her horse through the fragrant fields and by-roads, disguised by a cloak and peasant's hat as a stray peddler or farmer's boy. Her favourite hour for a stroll was three in the morning. Carrying her writing materials, with a hunk of bread and the eternal cigarettes, in a small basket, she wandered along the banks of little streams, chased butterflies through the fields of yellow grain, or rested in solitary pastures where flocks of sheep fled bleating from this rare sight of a human form. When the sun was high enough to scorch, she jumped, all clothed, into the river ; then went to sleep in the long grass until her clothing was dry again. It is not to be supposed that these extraordinary expeditions were always solitary. When one is involved in a divorce suit problems constantly arise that must be discussed with one's solicitor !

The lessons in Republicanism continued and bore fruit. George began to take pride in recalling that her maternal grandfather sold birds on the Quai des Oiseaux, and that on her mother's side she came of the pure blood of the people. She remembered that from her cradle she had an aversion to her Dupin connections. She attributed this wholly to her plebeian descent, and warmed towards Sophie Delaborde and her kindred. *Lélia* was entirely rewritten from a humanitarian standpoint, and the heroine, instead of being strangled by a fanatical monk, became a nun, and devoted her beauty and talents to the performance of noble works and teaching of humanitarian ideals, for which a second volume was required. The *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, which had begun as a series of *causeries* with Alfred de Musset upon Art, Beauty and Sentiment, were continued under the inspiration of Everard, some of them being addressed to him ; and of, course, acquired a

revolutionary slant. " The style is the man," was the *spirituel* comment made in Delphine Gay's Paris salon, where the Venetian Lovers had already provoked so many *bon mots*. It was evident that a new performer was striking the strings of this responsive Lyre, but his personality was not yet revealed to the public.

In July, the Appeal of Casimir was presented at the Court of Bourges. Mme. Sand's domestic affairs were becoming celebrated and the Court was crowded. She entered leaning on the arm of Michel. A sort of Amazon in trousers and with pistols in her belt was expected ; it was a shock to see only a small lady dressed in white, with a flowered shawl and her veil modestly lowered. All her friends rallied to her support, Fleury, Planet, Papet, Rollinat, Néraud, even Émile Regnault, whom she had not seen since she turned his friend Sandeau out of doors. Aurélien de Sèze, on learning that Casimir intended to base his appeal on the Pyrenees episode, of sacred memory, had written very gallantly to authorise any use her counsel chose to make of his letters—those letters he had been so anxious that Casimir should read—and even offered to surrender her precious journal, if she thought it desirable. This, in a married man and the father of a family, testified to a heart as pure as it was loyal. Aurore's own letter to Casimir, however, the one in which she had depicted her struggle and determination to substitute *amitié* for *amour*, and to meet Casimir's tastes and habits as an obedient and faithful wife, furnished sufficient field for the counsels on both sides to display their skill, Michel reading the repentant passages, as soon as Casimir's lawyer had finished the self-accusing ones, and depicting so feelingly the lonely, unappreciated, self-abnegating life of the gifted Mme. Dudevant, and the selfish brutality of her farmer-husband, that strong men wept and the entire Court was profoundly moved. There were still some old-fashioned and literal souls on the jury who could make no allowances for the caprices of Lélia's lyre, and who insisted that a woman who wrote novels attacking the marriage institution and subverting the morals of the young, should not be allowed the guardianhip of her children. But in spite of a divided verdict, Casimir saw plainly that he had no case against the

brilliant " Defender of the Twenty-two," and he dropped his pistols and capitulated. He relinquished the children, ceded half of his wife's property and furnished a minute inventory of goods and chattels at Nohant, which was to be hers, not omitting fifteen pots of jam and an iron stove at one franc fifty. Casimir had always a just and careful regard for material values.

" I propose sometime," George Sand wrote to the *Journal du Cher*, which had favoured the ejected husband in its very one-sided account of the trial, " to write the history of my suit, which is interesting and important, not on account of myself, but for the great social questions involved in it, which have been singularly misunderstood by my adversary."

It was the feast of St. Anne when George took Solange back to Nohant, and as they drove down the lane that led into the little hamlet from the Châteauroux road, they saw the villagers dancing on the green in front of the château gates. The " gars " in their long blue tunics and broad-brimmed hats piped merrily on their great clumsy *cornemuses* for the pretty girls in white caps and fichus to dance. The old folks waved a welcome from the top of the high stone steps that led to their mossy-roofed cottages, and the men rose from the long tables under the trees, where they were drinking, to greet their victorious châtelaine. A great wave of democratic emotion swept over her. She became conscious of the true meaning of solidarity.

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It is the distressing fate of those who have loved too well, to be continually suspected of loving too much. The Spartan peasant Michel was a prey to the same jealousies as the aristocratic author of the *Nuits*, and his manner of expressing his unjustifiable suspicions was far less subtle. He had subdued this original and independent character; he had converted her to his political ideals—or supposed that he had—but was he sure that he possessed her exclusive affection? She had so many " followers "! How about that tutor, Mallefille, with a taste for journalism, he asked himself; and this young fellow, Gévaudan, with his " legitimist " hobby, who was always hanging around her? " That child? " cried George; " too ridiculous! " Still more serious doubts disturbed him as to the status of his old friend, Charles Didier, whose rooms

were the headquarters of all the Republicans coming to Paris from the departments. George scorned the imputation. She scolded and petted Charles, laughed at his jokes and admired his ability, called him her " white bear," because of his white head that went so oddly with his youthful face ; but he was perfectly safe, for he already had an Aspasia.

The Abbé Rochet, a temperamental priest, whose orthodoxy had been undermined by a too sedulous perusal of heretical literature, was a less formidable rival, because he belonged to that outgrown school of sentimentality which she had, presumably, put behind her. An obscure curé of a poor country parish, the Abbé had been emboldened to express to the great unknown George Sand the fraternal and sympathetic bond which he had discovered between them when he read the *Lettres d'un Voyageur*. In his opinion these letters contained the cream of all that Rousseau thought and Châteaubriand sang. He wrote to tell her so.

" You composed those pages as you dreamed at the foot of a willow, smelling a rose, and listening to the plaint of a dove, while you gazed at an eagle soaring in the air." In *Lélia* he had detected the " great cry of humanity," sung to the sad music of the " lyre of broken hearts," and he saw that her sorrows were like those of Jeremiah. *Valentine* and *Indiana* were the perfect expression of his conception of the gospel of the Evangelists.

George was in the way of receiving many ardent tributes of this nature from unknown admirers of her books, but this lonely little curé of Champenoise, whose symbol of the soaring eagle so aptly fitted the image of the sublime Michel as she conceived him, touched her heart. She replied to his letters, and did him a good turn by promptly repressing his avowed literary aspirations, at the same time cautioning him not to abandon too rashly his priestly office, which had been secured by the self-denial of his humble and dependent parents. The Abbé Rochet was in raptures over her kind interest.

" What is stronger than love and sweeter than honey ? It is your magnificent letter ! It is your advice ! It is you ! Had I never possessed a soul you would have given me one. I am sure of it."

While, at her suggestion, he deferred decision as to his error

in allying himself to an ecclesiastical system that afforded no sanctuary for liberty, he declared himself in favour of the marriage of the clergy and the sanctions of divorce. After a visit to Nohant he became lyrical.

" I do not know what to call the sentiment I feel," he wrote her. " I have never esteemed—why not say it ?—*loved* anyone as I do you. Never has a woman, seated before me, come back to my memory so deliciously ; and yet never has sentiment been so calm, chaste, gentle, pure."

He longed to be able to take care of her when she should become ill (illness and the care of the sick played an important *rôle* in the rites of Romanticism), and he paid such devout tribute to the portrait she had given him that his housekeeper, mistaking it for that of a saint, placed it on the altar before the Holy Thursday mass. This was the road they all went, these poor romantic souls, when Lélia fixed her great sphinx eyes upon them !

The new saint was not likely to be recommended for beatification, however. The curé of Ardenches warned the Abbé that his visits to Nohant must be discontinued, under pain of ecclesiastical censure. The scandalous divorce proceedings, and the bold republican views and alliances of the châtelaine of Nohant had made her *persona non grata* in the eyes of the Church. Her books were on the Index.

The Abbé was not discouraged. He wanted to draw nearer to Nohant. He begged for Mme. Sand's influence in securing him a vacant parish in her neighbourhood. George then had a chance to test in how far her " influence " had been damaged by her principles. Very reluctantly she consented to use it in getting the little Abbé appointed to her own parish of Nohant-Vic, whose modest living she volunteered to supplement by the office of tutor to Maurice—that function that sustained so many semi-sentimental relations—at a salary of 1,000 francs. But, as she had feared, her patronage was unavailing ; and the poor little curé, after beating his wings against his bars for some time longer, was destituted. His subsequent reinstatement removed him still farther away from the object of his pure and gentle sentiments.

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Michel continued to be jealous, even of her portier. When George was absorbed in republican meditations one day, he locked the door of her apartment on the outside, as he went out, putting the key in his pocket. When she at length came out of the silence, she discovered that she was a prisoner. She tranquilly resumed her reflections until he returned three hours later, and then proposed, very sweetly, that they go out for dinner. But she added another sage reflection upon the way of a man with a woman to those that had been gradually accumulating ever since her early disillusions about Casimir :

" I have noticed that men get rougher and more exasperated, when, in a moral struggle, one shows gentleness and devotion. This is an almost invariable rule in love."

Michel had all the vanity, the love of domination, and the coarse brutality of the peasant class from which he sprung. But even a subtler spirit than his would have been intoxicated by such incense as this :

" You are my pole-star. When you disappear I wander in the night and the tempest. . . . I was a virgin mind. I waited for a real man to appear and instruct me. You came. You taught me. You are not the man I waited for, yet I am yours by the conviction you have brought me, and I am bound to you by chains that cannot be broken."

Even dictators can have a surfeit of adulation. Moreover, Michel doubted the thoroughness of Lélia's conversion from Romanticism. She always stopped short of the ultimate conclusion—recoiled when he drove the " social question " to its lowest terms. Women were only creatures of sentiment after all ! They had no fundamental principles. And when she tired of discussion and sat gazing solemnly at him, he thought her rather dull. A plan he had once considered of divorcing his wife and marrying his former client, binding her to himself with the fetters he had so chivalrously knocked off for her, was allowed to lapse. George had reason to think that he was experimenting upon the sentimental susceptibilities of another woman. Mme. Michel, too, was growing restive under the infidelities of her husband.

" Why don't you write me," George implored. " What is

this new fit? Are you sick, my God? Are you sulking? Your face the last time I saw it was quite changed; your impatience to leave me was ill-concealed. If I am unable to prevent your senses from yielding to other temptations, I am none the less the same faithful companion who nursed you so tenderly, the comrade who would mount the scaffold with you."

"Malediction!" he answered at last; "I am enduring a battle in my own home every day and every hour for you and on account of you. Enemy to right; enemy to left! I must have a rest."

A long, cold, storm-bound winter at Nohant, shut up in her big house with two sick children, the sad north wind moaning through the tall pines, and Michel, as capricious as the weather, alternating between ice and rain—this was freedom! And then the spring thaw came.

"You will come! The leaves open in the woods; the acacia revives; the sun warms the grass. Come, let us be happy, even were I to die the next day! I have but one passion in the world—it is you. . . . Appear, my lover, and, reanimated like the earth at the return of the May sun, I shall cast off my winding sheet of ice, and I shall thrill with love. I shall leap with joy in your arms of iron. I shall go to meet you like the spouse in the Song of Songs going to meet the Well-Beloved."

This beautiful lyric was wholly wasted on the vulgar soul of Michel de Bourges. He came, and he went, according to his moods; came "inexpressibly tender and kind"; departed to torment her by his silence and coldness. He was born to be a dictator; since he could not dominate men, his vanity exulted in tyrannising over a woman—and such a woman!

But gentleness and devotion cannot survive such gusty moods indefinitely. George felt her soul break and her love die.

"I am fed up with great men," she wrote a friend. "I would like to shut them all up in Plutarch. There they would not make me suffer from their human side. Let them be carved in marble or cast in bronze, and speak no more of them!"

Recourse to a journal was always an effective way of exorcising

a troublesome passion. George, who recognised the intimate connection between her liver and her heart affections, wrote daily advice to herself from the learned Dr. Piffoël, a nickname derived from her *long nose*. " Don't be duped," said this learned practitioner. " Don't allow yourself to suffer in your inmost soul because your body is out of order. Tears are debilitating, and thoughts of hate and revenge exhaust the strength. Eat little and frequently ; pray often, and seek the inner light which will dispel the clouds."

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Dr. Piffoël, lying on the sofa in his shabby old dressing-gown, beside the table where hot tears and watery ink once blurred the pages of his journal, was aroused by the voice of Solange.

" Mama, may I have this ? "

" Have what, my child ? "

" This old notebook."

" Why, that is my journal. I can't let you have that ! "

" Please, Mama, let me have it. It is of no use. I found it in the rag bag in the garret."

" Ah, my dear Solange, my thoughts of two years ago in the rag bag ? "

" Please, Mama, give it to me to cut soldiers out of."

" Soldiers, you naughty girl, out of my thoughts of 1837 ? "

" Are thoughts made like that ? "

(A voice.) " Neither more nor less."

" Please, dear Mama, give it to me then to write my thoughts in. I have thoughts too."

" No, no ; you haven't thoughts."

" Yes I have ! "

" Tell me one."

" I love you."

" Tell me another."

" I don't like Greek history."

" And another."

" I am hungry. There, that is enough thoughts for one day."

" And the moral of this farce that people insist on calling life," Dr. Piffoël reflected, " is the everlasting fable of the

Wandering Jew. It is forbidden for my patient to rest. It is forbidden her to die. She knows that her power to love is inexhaustible, and therefore she is calm. But since my note-book has been found, I will go on with my journal."

* * * * *

And the star of Everard paled and set. He put on a wig, and went into Society. He forgot that he had been a Babouist—for Cæsar was ambitious—and when the overturn in the government came, no one even thought of naming him for a tribune of the people.

CHAPTER X

FELLOWES AND PIFFOËLS

" Ce visage d'homme-ange qui fixe toujours la pensée des femmes—une destinée conduite en perfection, oscillante entre le plaisir de vivre et sa justification par le travail."

Pourtalès: La Vie de Liszt.[1]

FRANZ LISZT as an enormous spider, head of a man, beaked like a hawk, rapaciously gathering in armfuls of adoring ladies with his long virtuoso's claws—this was how the caricaturists saw the distinguished pianist at the height of his fame. Franz Liszt, a struggling young musician of twenty-six, an exquisite creature with large, soft, Andrea-del-Sarto eyes under a pure serious brow, and straight hair parted on one side and falling to his shoulders like a young Raphael—that was how he appeared to Mlle. Mérienne of Geneva, who painted his portrait somewhere about the time that Mme. Sand was finally disposing of the last vestiges of her Dudevant shackles. A rare spirit, in whom religion, art and love were so interwoven that he seemed the incarnation of all three; an ecstatic Florentine saint in his physical fragility, his sweet earnestness, his almost unearthly beauty, raptly listening beside the throne of Our Lady to strains of heavenly music unheard by vulgar ears—this was the youthful Franz Liszt who climbed with beating, eager heart the long stairs up to the mansard on Quai Malaquais, to have his first glimpse of the divine Lélia.

While he still trembled on the threshold of fame and success, the young Liszt was obliged to supplement the loyal but meagre subsidies from home by teaching the rudiments of his art to those less gifted but more favoured by fortune, and among

[1] " This face of a man-angel, which always takes possession of the imagination of women—a destiny carried out to perfection, vibrating between the pleasure of life and its justification by work."—POURTALÈS: *Life of Liszt.*

his pupils was the young sister of Alfred de Musset. Alfred gladly consented to bring the enchanting youth to see his mistress, for whose writings Liszt professed an ardent cult. After the first inevitable revulsion that nearly everybody experienced on introduction to this small, still woman with the imperturbability of a sphinx, Liszt entered eagerly upon his period of novitiate in her friendship, in the course of which many bonds of sympathy were rapidly revealed. They spoke the same language, it seemed ; the blood of René and of the *Génie de Christianisme* flowed in their veins. They had the same mystical conception of love, art, religion ; tended to the same exalted symbolism in its expression. Indeed, they discovered so close a correspondence in views and ideals that Alfred, stung in the last spasms of his expiring passion for Lélia by the malicious gossip of a witty frequenter of salons, named Heinrich Heine, allowed his jealousy to fix upon his sister's angelic music master. The almighty and omniscient Buloz, to whom Alfred confided his suspicions, passed on the word to George Sand. " Preposterous ! " she cried, but took the precaution to warn the blameless Liszt to avoid all appearance of evil for the present. Liszt, like Planche, flew to cover, aghast at such implications, and the friendship waned. " There was just one moment," she confessed, " when I was afraid that he was going to fall in love, but that passed."

But George had enthroned this spiritual young artist in her heart—quite innocuously—as a sort of patron saint, and after her Wounded Dove had breathed out his dying venom in the *Nuit d'Octobre*, and the Venice affair had been decently interred and properly mourned, her mind reverted to Franz Liszt as one of those élite souls, like Meyerbeer, Delacroix and Buloz, who might assist her in adopting the *sage* and *honnête* life to which the holy Father Sainte-Beuve was exhorting her. Recalling that it was Liszt who had told her that only God was worthy of being loved as she loved Alfred, she reopened their intimacy by writing him that she was busy " killing love," and was beginning to suspect that there was something else that was worth while in the world. But Liszt too had been making discoveries, and had expanded his theory that the only thing that was worth while was Divine Love as reflected in Art ;

he had now arrived at the conclusion that divine love was also reflected in human love. In the course of his piano lessons he had succeeded so well in instilling this mystic doctrine into the mobile mind of the lovely young Countess d'Agoult, that she insisted, to his consternation, upon abandoning an elderly husband, two little children, and a distinguished salon, in which her languishing heart and her ambitious spirit had sought distraction, for the love of the shadowy eyes of her master. The gentle Franz had not foreseen this practical application of his teachings. He had no more desire to break up the sanctity of a home than to wreck his own very promising career by leaving Paris, where fame and success were just beginning to smile upon him. But he was charmingly chivalrous, and when the lady fled to Geneva she left him no honourable part but to follow, and to bury his budding celebrity in the chill drab society of the city of Calvin.

The lady who had so recklessly embroiled her own future and that of the artist, had been greatly fortified in her defiance of social convention and her determination to take this decisive step, by a novel entitled *Léone Leoni*, which was regarded by the younger generation of that day as the supreme expression of the gospel of the sacrifice to Love. This story, which was laid in Venice, and was faintly reminiscent of some of Mme. Sand's trials with de Musset, was a sort of romantic variation of the " patient Griselda " theme : " Though thou slay me, yet will I trust thee." It pushed to extremity her favourite doctrine of self-abnegation in the service of passion, announced so dramatically in *Indiana*. Liszt, too, was an admirer of *Léone Leoni*, in his sweetly mystical way, and together, like Paolo and Francesca, he and his pupil had drunk deep of the perilous stuff offered by his favourite author, his dark, tumbled locks mingling with her elaborate coiffure of golden curls as they bent over its seductive pages. It was but natural, then, that the countess should wish to make the acquaintance of the woman who had helped her to clear the barriers of her artificial and self-indulgent existence in pursuit of the higher life. Even before she decided to take the leap, Liszt had brought about a meeting. " Six feet of snow on top of twenty feet of lava ; " some wit had thus taken her measure ! George had

found the ice at once—" quite English in manner." Being then in the first flush of Michel's republicanism, she attributed it to pride of race and fortune. For this white and gold goddess, with the calm, limpid blue eyes and ravishing Parisian costumes, had inherited her hauteur from a noble French *émigré* and her wealth from the Bethmanns, bankers of Frankfort. But after the Countess had renounced all these baubles for love of Franz Liszt, George revised her opinion. " I see in you the only beautiful and estimable and truly noble thing in the patrician sphere," she wrote her, and henceforth Marie d'Agoult became " my beautiful golden Countess "—" my white Arabella." Perhaps there was a little too much effusion of this sort to be quite genuine, but George did not forget that her own solid position in Liszt's affection might in itself be a disqualification, requiring justification in the eyes of this coldly self-contained goddess. The disciple of *Léone Leoni* accepted her admiration graciously, as befitted the patrician sphere, but with a certain reserve that suggested she had not been unacquainted with the gossip that had once involved Lélia and the sainted Liszt. One can never be entirely sure of these matters ! But she was curious to know more of this extraordinary Jewish-looking woman, who affected informal manners and masculine apparel, but had such wonderful little soft white hands. Moreover, in the social and artistic isolation in which the eloping couple found themselves at Geneva, there was a terrible risk of *ennui* and of consequent disillusion. George Sand was, in the nature of the case, the logical person to share and bless the self-banishment of her disciples, and the dazzling Countess was confident that her own prestige had every advantage in the association of their rival qualities. So when their sublime union had been crowned by the birth of the little Blanchide, named, presumably, for the mountain that presided over her advent, rather than for the reputed temperament of the " white Arabella," and the pair were once more free to climb over the Swiss uplands quoting Obermann, and Liszt was encouraged to reveal himself to the Genevan public in concerts made up of Grand Fantasias and Grand Potpourris and Grand Rhapsodies, they began to ply Mme. Sand with urgent invitations to join them. The curiosity was mutual. George, pro-

testing her eagerness to find herself once more seated on the floor under Liszt's piano, was always on the point of spreading her wings for Switzerland, but fresh entanglements with the divorce court, and with Michel, delayed her flight. There was also a rumour, she hinted, current in Paris, to the effect that it was Lélia who had eloped to Geneva with Liszt. Perhaps, " not being permitted to protest that there was a good angel between them to sanctify their friendship," it might be unwise to lend further colour to that report? It might furnish her adversaries in the divorce proceedings with a pretext for taking her children from her! The white Arabella made no audible comment on this apprehension, but it is possible that the lava beneath the snow stirred slightly.

* * * * *

The end of the summer of 1836, however, saw the arrival of George in her costume of blouse and trousers, sanctified by reminiscences of an earlier sentimental journey in the company of the now submerged Pagello. She was accompanied by Maurice, Solange, dressed in boy's clothes, and a Berrichon nurse named Ursula. Having only the vaguest notion of where she was to overtake her urgent friends, considerable time and effort were expended in detecting the habitat of " a long-haired artist habitually humming *Dies Irae*." Whether he was a violin-maker or the leader of an orchestra seemed to be matters of equal indifference in the home of Calvinism. When his inn was finally discovered at the top of a perpendicular street, the discreet hostess was uncertain whether he was to be found in Paris or in England, and a blushing young lady with a music roll opined he might be in Italy. The situation was at its darkest, the rain and the night descending together, when a letter from Liszt and his lady was unearthed, containing directions for their discovery. They were at Chamounix, it appeared, and a certain gentleman, bearing the solidly respectable Genevese name of Pictet, had been delegated to escort her to them, if properly addressed.

That evening Major Pictet, having received an imperative summons in a note that smelled of tobacco, set out in considerable trepidation to pay his respects to his friend's expected guest. He was somewhat uncertain as to the sex and quality

of the mysterious George Sand. " The deeds and exploits of George have had the honour to engage singularly the attention of the French public," was the enlightenment vouchsafed by Liszt. A celebrated novelist, whose books no properly instructed young lady could hear mentioned without blushing ; a sort of peasant in hob-nailed shoes, bearing a tin box for the collection of botanical specimens ; an artist in a black velvet coat and a sky-blue cravat ; an emissary of a European revolutionary committee, disguised as a woman ; any or all of these phenomena might be expected to answer to the name of George Sand. It was a desperate position for a Pictet of Geneva and a married man.

Ushered into a room strewn with the contents of bags and boxes offering evidences of feminine apparel, a cigar was offered by a small and elegant white hand. The owner of the hand and cigar, having resumed the consumption of a cup of coffee at a table under the lamp, revealed a red waistcoat and a cravat beneath a long unbelted blouse. Masses of glossy dark hair, falling on either side of an oval face, set off a pallor that was as if the spirit of the ages, reflected the Major, had breathed upon Parian marble ! Adolph Pictet was a philosopher, a student of Sanscrit, and an admirer of the Mahabharâta. He was fond of sounding—" cubing," he called it—the people and ideas he met, finding their three dimensions. He was unable to " cube " George Sand.

" How do you like Switzerland ? " was a safe and easy opening to a conversation in which the initiative seemed to devolve upon the Swiss.

" Everything in Switzerland is banal, except Nature," was the reply, as the stranger, having finished the coffee, proceeded to light a cigar. " And Nature would be banal, if it could ! "

" It is at least a republic, the land of liberty," protested the Major, remembering the revolutionary committee.

" There is no liberty here, except that of the chamois and the eagle. Without equality of property there can be no republic."

The Genevese blinked and ventured to express his doubts of the possibility of maintaining this desirable equilibrium of property, even if once obtained. This, he was assured, could

be regulated by a levelling process, say, every twenty years. All superfluities could then be reduced.

" Look out for orgies in the nineteenth year," he murmured, glancing furtively at the expensive cigars in their golden bands. Decidedly, he was dealing with the Revolutionary Emissary ! He peered uneasily at the nether garments of this mysterious being, which were modestly concealed beneath the skirts of her long blouse. He bethought himself of a shibboleth, a sure trap for the weaker sex.

" What would you do with women in your republic ? "

" Oh, I would suppress them."

Major Pictet began to find the cigars a little heady. They were poetic cigars, he was told, made of the leaves of the *Datura fastuosa*. The Revolutionary Emissary was melting into the Botanist with the tin specimen box. The magnificent puffs of smoke from the *Datura fastuosa* writhed and twisted in oriental images and symbols around that pale, sombre face and floated off in slender shreds of mother-of-pearl before the astonished eyes of the admirer of the Mahabharâta. The dark curls of the Protean stranger assumed the contortions of Medusa.

A burst of childish laughter on the stairs ; the horrible Medusa head glowed with soft radiance. " Here are the brats ! " The Major hesitated no longer. George Sand was a woman !

At the Union Hotel in Chamounix, whither George and " the brats " proceeded the next day, accompanied by the terrified Ursula (who, having confused Martigny with Martinique, was afraid of earthquakes), there was a worried proprietor, who was no less scandalised than his large and respectable English *clientèle* by the manners and morals of the Bohemian party in suite No. 13. The svelte and elegant Countess, always so *bien-coiffée*, and ever so little faded, in spite of her enchanting Paris " creations," her floating green veil, and her scent-bottle ; Liszt, slender and boyish, with his Raphael face, his long hair, and his Italian *beretta ;* his favourite pupil, Hermann Cohen, alias " Puzzi," dressed as a girl ; to which bizarre company was now added George, with her trousers and blouse and long Turkish pipe, the plump little Solange in boy's

clothes, and the dreamy-eyed Maurice, who was a small replica of his mother.

" They come and go," said the bewildered landlord to Major Pictet, who followed in hot pursuit. " Sometimes there are five males and one female ; and sometimes there are two women and four men, and then again there are three of each."

The bare corridors of the old hotel re-echoed to the gaiety of the *Piffoëls*, or the long-nosed family, as Liszt called the Sandites, and the *Fellowes*—George's name for the lovers. *Dulce est dissipere in loco !* Liszt, so superior in great things, proved also to be eminent in small things, and the entire party displayed that facility for amusement, that relish for childish tricks, jokes and pranks, to which great minds so gracefully and inexplicably abandon themselves when on an excursion. The servants were scandalised, and the English guests, unaware that the Piffoëls and the Fellowes were people with whom it would some day be an honour to claim a bowing acquaintance, passed them with lowered veils, or surveyed them insolently through their monocles. " Who the devil are these people ? Strolling musicians ? "

A hotel register might have enlightened them.

Name . .	Liszt	*Name* . .	Piffoëls
Born . .	Parnassus	*Occupation* .	Flaneurs
Coming from .	Doubt	*Home* . .	Nature
Going to . .	Truth	*Coming from* .	God
		Going to . .	Heaven

What did they talk about on those stormy days when the Tête Noire was wrapped in clouds, or in the evenings after a hard day on the Mer de Glace ? They discussed, of course, the Nature of ART. Was it a language ? Was it imitative ? George listened in silence for a long time. Then, blowing a cloud of fine smoke from her pipe, she cried, " Subleties all ! Art is creation." And she launched into a torrent of illustrations, proofs and personal reminiscences. Again the Major felt his head swimming. He saw, not a Medusa this time, but a strange being crouched in the cup of a gigantic lotus under an azure sky, holding a golden lyre, and presiding over a world of botanical specimens. The voice ceased, the clouds of smoke parted and there was only a dark little woman sitting on a

flowered sofa, against a blue wall-paper, and beside her the golden *chevelure* of the Countess d'Agoult. Then, amid violent protests, Liszt undertook to read aloud a German philosophical work in eight volumes. This gave rise to a heated argument concerning the nature of the Absolute. " The Absolute is identical with itself ! " George, exceedingly bored, sat on the floor drawing caricatures of the learned ones ; of Liszt, with rumpled hair, crying, " What does that mean ? " ; of the Major, fiercely bearded, admitting, " It is a little vague " ; of Arabella, buried in her curls and cushions moaning, " I have been lost in it myself for a long time."

Then the rain stopped, and the sun came out, and George, who had fallen asleep, woke up crying, " Have you found the Absolute ? " And they all trooped off in search of it on the Tête Noire ; the Countess, dignified and graceful in her faultless travelling suit ; George, still smoking nonchalantly, astride a mule, with her dark curls floating from under a big straw hat, and the children, shouting uproariously on the back of a donkey, bringing up the rear.

As the blue depths of the Valois opened at their feet, with its crown of violet peaks, and the silver ribbon of the Rhône winding through it, Liszt grew expansive. " Nothing," he exclaimed, " is lacking in this picture of death and silence."

" *Vive la Vie !* " cried George. " Behold the only thing it lacks ; life ! " And she held up a delicate blue campanula, plucked from the edge of the glacier. " This, and my beautiful Solange are more wonderful to me than all your Titanic Alpine monstrosities." " *Vive la Vie !* " echoed the Major. " Behold how you create it yourself ! All about you objects become animated and acquire life. Alpine flowers open on the edge of glaciers, the pines bow and hold out their arms, and the very stones rise to offer you a firmer step." This indifference to the grandeurs of mountain scenery amazed the Swiss philosopher however, and he grew pale when she declared that the grandiose in scenery had no charm for her. " Can you imagine anything so stupid as a mountain ? I have not come for the scenery, but to see my friends."

" Is your friend a musician ? " he asked the " white Arabella," who was straying pensively apart under her parasol.

" No," said the lawful mistress of Franz Liszt, quickly. Then she added politely, " but she has all the elements of a fine musician, and I do not know why they have not been developed."

" She impresses me as a harp, splendidly fashioned, but when one tries to play on it, one finds only strings of iron or diamonds."

At that moment, two little Savoyard shepherds with their pipes sprung up from behind a rock. *Vive la Vie !* Liszt fled with his fingers in his ears, but George, who came from the country of the *cornemuse*, seized a pipe and gave an exhibition of her skill. " You see," she said mockingly, " that this harp has its own language, but it takes another hand than yours to make it speak. I, too, perhaps, have my music—a music which cannot be heard by carnal ears."

That night a big bowl of punch was ordered for Suite 13. " We will see if we can make this solemn seeker of the Absolute drunk," said George ; but they only succeeded in giving Pictet a nightmare, in which the lady who despised Swiss scenery and philosophy appeared to him astride a huge black cat, and, seizing from his chimney shelf one by one his favourite tomes of philosophy, hurled them upon the oppressed chest of the too venturesome dreamer.

In the great white cathedral of Freibourg, this merry idyl came to an end. They had taken refuge there from a storm which Liszt raised to sublime heights by his improvisations on the famous organ, filling the lofty vaults with his crashing chords and streaming arpeggios. Then, as the tempest passed and fitful sunbeams began once more to light up the quaint dingy old frescoes and play over the little Piffoëls and Puzzi, squatted like cherubs on the altar step,—thunder, lightning, cow-bells and falling trees, all melted into a magnificent finale on the master's favourite theme of *Dies Irae*, and the awed and sobered listeners beheld the pure profile of the artist radiant once more with the exaltation of the saintly fanatic.

" My friends," he said, as the music died away with the last distant rumble of thunder, " We are about to separate. May the memory of these days that we have passed together never be effaced. And let us never forget that Art and Science, Poetry and Thought, the Beautiful and the True, are the two

archangels that spread their golden wings above the temple of humanity."

George returned to Paris, a convert to Liszt's theories about Programme Music, and with a literary version of his *Rondo Fantastique*, which he had dedicated to her, in her valise, as a pledge of her conversion. " Here comes George Sand back from the mountains arm in arm with Franz Liszt," cried the musical critics.

She immortalised the trip to Chamounix in another of those charming *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, in which the public had the good fortune to meet intimately so many of her friends, famous or obscure. Major Pictet who had returned once more to the *régime* of a married man and a scholar, looked forward with pleasure to the *spirituel* picture he would present in the pages of this *Lettre*, as the man of Universal Interests. In his preoccupation with his *rôle*, past and future, he allowed the dust of weeks to accumulate upon a rare copy of the Mahabharâta just received from Calcutta. But he was doomed to disappointment. George was again astride of the Black Cat.

" To the devil with your Piffoëls and her Letter to the *Revue !* " he wrote Liszt. " Couldn't she find anything better to make of me than a pedantic and brutal grumbler, only able, in the face of the Alps and of such good company, to play the bad scholastic ? . . . In reading this piece of hers, I feel as if I had been in the paws of a lioness, agreeably sporting with my person. . . . She has spoiled all the memories of my trip, curse her ! "

" Come, come, you take it too seriously," replied Liszt. " Come out of your serious Genevese atmosphere, a trifle too overcharged with yeast."

The Major took his revenge by writing his own account of the *Course à Chamounix* to show her how it should have been done. George was charmed.

" For the first time in my life I breathe the incense to which the gods themselves are not insensible," she wrote him. " Nothing has ever given me so much pleasure in the way of praise."

Then the Major wrote his great work on " The Beautiful in Nature," and became famous.

* * * * *

THE MAJOR'S NIGHTMARE

Drawing by Tony Johannot. (From Pictet's *Course à Chamounix*, ed. Duprat, 1838. Public Library, Geneva.)

The Fellowes were tiring of their exile. The ivory keys of Liszt's piano did not unlock the money coffers of the Genevese as freely as those of the Parisians. The white Arabella fretted secretly for the throne in her salon to which she had just climbed when she so rashly, and for the first and only time, allowed sentiment to run away with her brain. Franz was frankly bored. They returned unobtrusively to Paris, and in the Hôtel de la France on Rue Lafitte the Countess essayed to collect the few faithful remnants of her old salon, eked out by some of Liszt's artistic circle. To this somewhat heterogeneous collection, Baron Eckstein, Eugène Sue (popular writers of the kind of literary morsels that Balzac called " tartines ") Nourrit the tenor, Meyerbeer, whose opera *Les Huguenots* was the talk of the moment, and a frail fair young Polish pianist named Frédéric Chopin, whose music Liszt greatly admired,—Mme. Sand, who at the desire of the Fellowes had also come to the Hôtel de la France, lent the éclat of her patronage and contributed some of her own friends, such as Heinrich Heine, with his sharp tongue and caustic wit, the Abbé Lamennais and Pierre Leroux, Republicans, both, and preachers of the liberal doctrines in religion which generally go hand in hand with Radicalism in politics.

Liszt's zeal for all kinds of mystical religious ideas was closely linked with his musical genius. Only his loyalty to his parents who had sacrificed everything to fit him for the career of a musician had saved him from joining a monastic order. To reconcile these contending passions he had adopted the theory of the sacerdotal calling of the artist. When the Saint-Simoniens opened courses for the application of their theories to the various industries and professions, Liszt attended the course for musicians. The founder of Saint-Simonism was accustomed to have his valet wake him every morning with the words, " M. le Comte, get up, you have great things to do ! " And M. le Comte had spent 150,000 francs to discover a religion which would reconcile sense and soul and secure to all men the finest development of their bodies as well as their minds. This was the religion of the rehabilitation of the flesh, which ever since the Middle Ages had rested under a curse. Liszt was not especially interested in the doctrine of the rehabilitation of the

flesh, but he hoped that, in developing his human faculties, the Saint-Simoniens could assist him in realising his ideals of the sanctity of his art. He believed that it was impossible to be a great artist without first being a superior man.

Between George and Liszt Saint-Simonism became another party plank. She had always coquetted a bit with their doctrines, from the time she first came to Paris. Anything new, *outré*, and frowned upon as bizarre by the Philistines, attracted her interest and sympathy, though she was skittish if anyone tried to bridle her with an *ism* or a creed, as Michel had discovered to his disgust. But the slogan " Rehabilitation of the flesh " was intriguing. She persuaded Liszt to accompany her to the famous soirée of the Saint-Simoniens, when the Père Enfantin awaited the coming of the Revealing Woman, who was to lead her sex into the enjoyment of all their desires on an equal footing with the hitherto more privileged males. The Mother failed to arrive, so the evening fell rather flat, and George lost interest. But her generous heart was always getting her into difficulties, and her sympathy with Adolphe Guérault, one of the adepts of the doctrine, whom she had first consulted with regard to some of *Lélia's* heresies about the emancipation of women, induced her to take the Saint-Simoniens more seriously. She began to attend their meetings more frequently, and to entertain hopes that their socialistic doctrines might be utilised in Michel's republican propaganda, using, she hastened to explain, the weapons of persuasion, not of force. " I love your proletarians," she wrote Guérault ; " first, because they are proletarians, and then because I see in them the seed of truth, the germ of future civilisation . . . you have the hope, and you communicate its fires to me."

Her enthusiasm received a sudden check, however, when the " Family " tendered her a formal invitation to become their " Mother " and to assume the office which had been so long awaiting a worthy incumbent. The invitation was accompanied by a singular collection of gifts prepared by the loving hands of the individual members of the " Family," which was intended less as a bait to " Motherhood " than as a tribute to her literary services to the Cause of Oppressed Woman. The gifts, which numbered something like a hundred, included such useful

articles as a pair of boots, pantaloons and vest (white pantaloons, red waistcoat and blue tunic was the costume of the Saint-Simoniens), a hat, earrings, satin slippers, an apron, a corset. There were others of a less obviously utilitarian character ; for example, a cameo brooch, a bracelet, a drawing, a translation ; a song, a thermometer, cards, a dried bouquet, an oriental rose, pharmaceutical products for the toilet. Tobacco and cigars were omitted. George was absent at La Châtre when the gifts arrived, but Solange and Maurice had an opportunity to enjoy them in their own fashion before her return. She made haste to decline kindly but firmly the honour so unexpectedly thrust upon her. " We are all on our knees before the same God," she said. " But I am not one of those strong souls who can pledge themselves by an oath to a new road." She regretted that her occupation in the troublesome business of getting a divorce would prevent her from attending the ball to which they invited her. As for the gifts, she assured her proletarian friends very prettily that she would preserve them as relics.

" I will adorn my writing-table with the flowers that the industrious hands of your sisters have woven for me. I will reread often the beautiful canticle that Père Vincard addressed to me, and the sweet prayers of your poets will mingle in my memory with those I address to God each night. My children will be adorned with your charming work, and the jewels you destined for my use will pass to them as a precious and honourable heritage."

All of which does great honour to her kindness and delicacy ; but this little episode showed her that it was time to break off her flirtation with the Saint-Simoniens. When, discouraged in their efforts to find a " Mother " in France, a party of them started off to look for her in the Orient, arrayed in white robes and with pilgrim staffs, she went so far as to write to the adept who had involved her so deeply with his friends, that while she had admired the first fling of the " Family," she thought that possibly they had erred in the direction of their zeal. She confessed—and the hand of Michel becomes evident here—that the principle for which she had always admired them was that of the abolition of property, and that their fanaticism for

men and for proper names had seemed to her childish and finnicky.

After this, Liszt too, cooled toward the Saint-Simoniens; they had degenerated into rather a disreputable sect, and ceased to attract the attention of any but the police. George, always seeking to know more of those things that are hidden from the wise and prudent, began to investigate freemasonry, secret societies and magnetism. And as phrenology had brought her Michel, so magnetism brought her to the feet of the angelic Dr. Gaubert, who, like Michel, was prematurely bald, and wrinkled beside, but who inspired her with a real tenderness, which was entirely mutual. Like Michel, Dr. Gaubert lived a life of lofty and naïve austerity, but unlike Michel, he made no attempt to avail himself of the tenderness he inspired for any but strictly scientific and spiritual ends. George was a better subject for Republicanism than for Magnetism; and after discovering that they had both been deceived in some of the spiritual manifestations they experienced, she lost faith somewhat. She made up her mind that as her convictions always sprang from her emotions, instruction was less essential to her faith than sentiment. Also, she had become interested in the gospel of Pierre Leroux.

* * * * *

The winter of discontent that followed the joyous adventures of the Piffoëls and the Fellowes was passed at Nohant in alternate despair and exaltation, according to the barometer of the inconstant Michel's moods. To George, moping through the long cold months in her chimney corner, listening through clouds of smoke to the conversation of a dozen Berrichon comrades, all seeming to feel even duller than she, a ray of sunshine came with the promise of early spring.

"I want to come to Nohant!" wrote the Countess d'Agoult; "to live your life, to make friends with your dogs, and feed your chickens! I want to warm myself with your wood, eat your partridges and revive my poor worn-out machine with the air you breathe."

George was in raptures. She was suddenly aware of a thousand inconveniences at Nohant that she had never noticed before. Looking at it through the eyes of the aristocratic

Countess, the much-talked-of château de Nohant shrank discouragingly into " the poor little house that the Baron had at last given back to her." She would have liked to build a wing on it to enshrine worthily Liszt's piano and the glorious curls of Arabella, slightly tarnished though they were in the eyes of Parisian society. She decided to prepare her own room with its beautiful blue paper and Empire bedstead, for the delicate beauty, and to protect her more cosily from the draughts of an old country mansion, set to work herself to make curtains for it. The house was certainly shabby ; the bachelor life the Baron had led there, and the years of uncertainty during the divorce process, had not treated kindly the lovely old furnishings of Mme. Dupin. But the mistress laboured with a good heart, and when the Fellowes arrived, although the curtains had proved to be three feet too short, there was game in the pantry and the shed was piled to the roof with wood. Eugène Pelletan, Maurice's tutor (owing to his delicate health, the Baron had been persuaded to allow his son to be taken out of school) was sent to escort them from Châteauroux in a closed carriage. Nohant radiated hospitality, if not luxury.

During the spring and summer good cheer reigned, and a lively society was ever at hand. Nohant, in its way, glowed like Coppet in its golden days. Liszt's piano, brought from Paris, was a nine days' wonder in the neighbourhood, and the inhabitants of La Châtre lined up on summer evenings to hear its prodigious runs, arpeggios and chords shake and shiver and crash through the astonished shrubbery that screened the mansion from the highway. The peasants from the little stone cottages that clustered about the green outside the old turreted walls of the enclosure, stood in groups under the tall trees peering through the gates to the wide open doors from which issued magic sounds that silenced and put to shame the popular *cornemuse*. The twelve Berrichon comrades were favoured with box seats, and some of George's Republican friends—Charles Didier, of whom Michel was jealous, Scipion du Roure, an unknown admirer at first, who had proved so congenial that he had been adopted as a brother, Alexander Rey, and Bocage the actor—handsome, imperious, a son of the proletariat, whose melancholy passionate beauty had raised

him from a strolling comedian to the first *rôles* at the Odéon and the Comédie—all these were guests in the house at one time or another during the sojourn of the Fellowes. Liszt proposed to invite some of his confrères, both musical and metaphysical.

"With all my heart," said the Châtelaine;" all the Mickiewicz and Gryzmalas and Chopins in the world! Even Eugène Sue, if you like. I want Arabella to have all her friends around her. She can't live without Chopin, and I admire him too." But Chopin regretted. He was very sad just then over the defection of his young sweetheart, Marie Wodzinska, who had succumbed to the importunities of her ambitious parents, and bestowed her hand upon wealth instead of genius. A little horse was brought from Paris for the use of the Countess by a lively young gentleman named Gévaudan, who, together with young Pelletan, the tutor, furnished a compliant butt for the tricks and mystifications that Nohant guests must always participate in, such as horsehair in their beds, ghosts in their closets, pitchers of water thrown on their heads, and serenades under their windows at unseemly hours. Gévaudan was always available for a practical joke, whether he was required to hunt weasels in the garret, or to masquerade before the newly-arrived Pelletan as a deaf and quarrelsome veterinary, who swore, pounded on the table with his glass, and told bad jokes. He played his part so well that Mme. Fleury, who was not in the secret, fainted during a burlesque quarrel, and it was not until the irascible horse dealer and another guest from La Châtre had been carried off to bed, in a state of tearful inebriation, that the real Gévaudan, arriving in state in a post-chaise, and precipitating himself into the arms of the Châtelaine, revealed himself to the duped Pelletan as the ex-veterinary. Whereupon Pelletan, becoming very sad, went to bed too, reflecting blackly upon his unappreciated talents.

On another jovial occasion Mme. Sand's maid was dressed up to personate her mistress before an importunate lion-hunter, who had insisted upon forcing his way into the house to interview the distinguished novelist. Although, tutored by Gévaudan, the improvised authoress had much more distinguished manners than her prototype, her hands and figure were not what one might expect in the noble Lélia, and, owing to

absence of teeth, she had some difficulty with her " s's " and " t's." But the visitor was satisfied that he had met a great celebrity, and departed in ecstasy. The Fellowes were not present for all these merry jests, but what they missed while Liszt was absent on concert tours was minutely narrated in letters as matters which they would relish keenly, and somewhat in the manner of the *Course à Chamounix*.

Life assumed a more serious character when Liszt read aloud the German mystics, Hoffman's *Tales*, Schiller, Shakespeare and Victor Hugo, or George and the white Arabella went off for long horseback rides on the quiet moonlit by-roads of the Vallée Noire on warm, sweet summer nights, leaving Liszt behind happy with his pipe, his pens and his ruled sheets, tracing his thoughts on paper before he should confide them to the wondrous voice of his piano. There were fresh violets on the Countess' dressing table every morning, and she assured Mme. Sand that the more she saw of her the more she loved and esteemed her.

In the hot breathless evenings they sat in the garden heavy with the perfume of roses, and the nightingales were silenced by the splendid harmonies of Beethoven, Schumann, or Liszt's own compositions that floated through the motionless leaves of the lime trees.

" I love those phrases cut in two, suspended in the air, which he tosses on the piano when he is composing, and which rest, one foot raised, dancing in space like frolicsome spirits," George cried. " But most I love his great full chords of generosity, love, anger, but never hate ! "

The white Arabella paced the terrace restlessly, her tall, slender figure, swathed in a floating veil—which symbolised so well her cold inscrutable reserve—sometimes shining, then swallowed up in the blackness of the pines and tall plane trees. " Is it love," George asked herself, " or only generosity ? or loyalty ? " And, made wise by her own illusions, which were painfully dying in the course of mad midnight gallops to rendezvous with the obdurate and capricious Great Man, Michel de Bourges, George drowned with pity a certain distrust and dislike of the Golden Princess that was creeping into her generous heart.

The music ceased; the guests retired; the echo of horses' hoofs died away in the still night as the last visitor from La Châtre rode off down the valley, and the house was darkened and silent. Then began the working day of Liszt and George Sand. Sitting together with their pens and papers and pipes, at a little table by the light of a single lamp, Fellowes laboured over a piano arrangement of Beethoven's symphonies, while Dr. Piffoël who had recently been victorious in a suit to obtain freedom from the obnoxious chains of matrimony, wrote a novel called *Mauprat*, a story of ideal marriage, sanctified by noble and perfect love.

And at daybreak, when the birds were awaking and the mist in the valley was melting away, she stole upstairs in the grey light, leaving a note on the table for Maurice who was troubled with rheumatism: "See that Solange eats the meat which is on the plate, and take your *petit déjeuner maigre* and drink your herb tea." Or, "Wake me up when you call Solange." And the new convert to the sanctity of the marriage relation reflected with some harshness on the fact that all of Arabella's children were being cared for by their grandmother or by hired nurses.

The Countess continued to be effusive over her friend Piffoëls, and the beauties of the "adorable but melancholy banks" of the Indre, and to graciously acknowledge the stimulus to her literary aspirations gained in the companionship of George Sand. And George loyally returned her effusive praise and encouraged the "beautiful Princess" to develop her sentiments and ideas that were to be presented to the world under the pen name of "Daniel Stern." But the crust over the volcano was becoming daily thinner, and Arabella's affectionate tributes had a hollow ring. Liszt, too, the saintly Liszt, was descending to caustic rejoinders to the Countess' shallow affectations. "Real Beatrices die at eighteen!" when she romantically compared herself to Dante's divinity; "*Poses et Mensonges*," when she sought a title for her Souvenirs.

"After all, Liszt is justified," George thought. "She is a perfectly artificial product. She weighs and calculates all her acts; she pretends to have learned from me to love Nature, and to see the beauty of humble things, but she is only happy

in a dress costing a thousand francs. She only resounds in contact with other people's ideas."

The last of July the Fellowes left Nohant, never to return. There were no quarrels, no vulgarity, no explanations. They maintained for a while an attenuated correspondence until the friendship gradually stretched itself to invisibility. Their acquaintances lifted their eyebrows and exchanged conjectures. Some said Arabella was jealous. Some thought that the presence of a young aspirant to dramatic fame, by the name of Mallefille, who had succeeded Pelletan as Maurice's tutor (tutors were a convenient asset to a ménage where youth was so fêted), had caused friction, even rivalry. Others again whispered that the Châtelaine's waxing interest in one of Liszt's musical friends, Frédéric Chopin, whom Mme. d'Agoult had herself shown a disposition to patronise, was responsible for the disaffection. Whatever the cause, the Piffoëls and the Fellowes had dissolved partnership, and it was not until he had parted forever from his golden-haired Countess, that Liszt bethought himself again of Lélia, and sent her—a pipe!

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"What a theme for a novel!" exclaimed George Sand to Balzac, who paid her a visit while getting a setting for *La Comédie Humaine* in her neighbourhood. "*Les Galériens* or *Les Amours Forcés!* It won't do for me to write it for I am too intimately acquainted with the situation from within. But why don't you use it?"

Balzac pulled away meditatively at his houka—he had lately acquired the vice and had offered to initiate George.

"It has great dramatic possibilities," he agreed; "a guilty pair out of Dante's *Inferno*, chained to the same heavy ball which they drag about with them, as you say!"

"But what I can't understand," he continued after a pause, "is why you let those people dupe you so. They have just used you for a cover, and then for a buffer. You are always letting yourself be carried away by a fascinating face. Because someone has external beauty, you immediately think his soul must be beautiful, too, and attribute nobility of heart to every handsome dandy you meet. Bocage, Marie Dorval, even Lamennais (and Jules Sandeau, he almost added)—they all

prey upon your generosity and devotion, and then they turn and rend you. With all your intelligence, you are no judge of character. When you come right down to realities you are so gullible! And then," he added peevishly, "because you get disillusioned about love and marriage and friendship, you make a principle of it and condemn them all."

"In all I do," said George quietly, "I am led, in spite of myself; and believing at the time that I am right, I have no regrets when I find that I have been deceived."

"What a woman," Balzac thought to himself, as he stared at her curiously through the bluish veil of tobacco smoke. "With that long, olive face, gleaming white, where the firelight shines on it—like living ivory—impassive as an Isis on an Egyptian bas-relief! Or like a statue of Memphis, with those double bands of plaited hair arranged so severely about the wide, calm silent forehead. Her great unfathomable eyes, sublime in passion, but so dull and torpid now that she is lost in thought, have little amber rings around the pupils like those of a cat or a tiger. That firm, proud neck—let us forget that embonpoint is rapidly disfiguring it with an incipient double chin!—the full, mobile scarlet lips, the sensitive nostrils—why she is a Cleopatra, the little brunette who came near to changing the face of the world!"

"I believe I will write your novel," he said finally. "I am beginning to see it take form. But I shall not call it *Les Galériens;* I shall call it *Béatrix*, which, you say, is the rôle Mme. d'Agoult fancies she can play."

"And I shall put you in it, too, you female Don Juan, without debts or conquests," he added mentally. "I have sounded your soul to-night. Love for you is not an imperious need for the satisfaction of a passing pleasure, that is plain. With all your mental sophistication, your soul is pure; you are chaste, you know the theory but not the grossness of passion. Your idea of love is a sort of Heaven, full of noble sentiments and spiritual flowers and exalted morality, where two creatures, united into one angel, can fly on pure wings of rapture and poetry."

And, making a careful note of her costume, in which he thought her decidedly ravishing—a short coat, giving the effect

of a Greek tunic, over red trousers with embroidered ruffles, from beneath which peeped coquettish stockings and the prettiest little gold slippers trimmed with fringe—the great romancer brought his pleasant and profitable evening to a close.

" Her male is hard to find," he reflected as he left the Vallée Noire behind. " She is great, generous, chaste ;—manly qualities all these. But she hasn't a particle of coquetry. You could never offer her that gallantry that every Frenchman inevitably uses in addressing a woman, of whatever sort. She is *garçon*, *artiste*, *camarade ;* but she is not lovable. Her male is hard to find."

CHAPTER XI

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PETER

" Elle eut le talent divin de donner à tout des ailes, de faire de l'art avec l'idée qui pour les autres restait brute et sans forme. . . . Elle donnait la vie aux aspirations de ceux qui sentirent mais ne surent pas créer. . . . C'est le trait des grandes âmes d'être incapables de haïr. Elles voient du bien partout et elles aiment le bien en tout."
Feuilles Détachées. RENAN.[1]

" GEORGE SAND is nothing but a pale reflection of Pierre Leroux, a fanatical disciple of the same ideal, but a disciple mute, ravished, before his words, always ready to throw her own works in the fire, in order to write, speak, pray, and act under his inspiration. I am merely the populariser, with my diligent pen and impressionable heart, seeking to translate in romance the philosophy of the master. . . . I tell you this in order that you may understand clearly that it is a serious act of faith, the most serious of my life, and not an equivocal infatuation of a little lady for her physician or her confessor."

George was writing to the prospective editor of a paper she was about to inaugurate, in partnership with some of her Berry friends, for the promulgation of the gospel to which she had dedicated her pen ever since Dr. Piffoël's journal had been lost in the rag-bag.

She was very conscious of her debt to others. She acknowledged modestly that she was not wise enough to walk alone or to rely exclusively on books in her persevering quest of Truth. " Above all, my emotions need regulating," she reflected; " Wise counsels have come too late, after their fires have been so long smouldering under the ashes that it is hard to extinguish them." With her custom of respectful attention to everyone

[1] " She had the divine talent of giving wings to every thing, of producing art out of ideas that with others remained rude and without form. . . . She gave life to the aspirations of those who felt but knew not how to create. . . . It is the quality of great souls to be incapable of hating. They see good everywhere and they love the good in everything."—*Stray Leaves.* RENAN.

who crossed her path with a theory to expound, provided he was not traditional or conservative, she had picked up an extraordinary assortment of ideas, from all kinds and conditions of people, and never having had time to sort and classify them, her mind was a fearful chaos. The man who finally set her opinions in order and cleared up the last vestiges of useless and erroneous prejudices, had issued from the same social strata as Michel de Bourges, and when she definitely ranged herself under his standard, she was forced to part, for a time at least, from the more respectable and conservative society of Sainte-Beuve and his circle, and from the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

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The poor and humble parents of Pierre Leroux had been so astonished at his having taught himself to read in eight days that, convinced that they had brought forth a genius, they at once transported themselves and their numerous progeny to Paris, which offered more opportunities than his small native town for a poor lad to obtain an education. There they struggled to make a living by keeping a coffee-house, but they were obliged to practise such heroic self-denials in order to aid their son in his efforts to hold the small scholarships he obtained, that they finally died from privations and hardships. They had the satisfaction of realising, however, that their sacrifices had not been wasted. Pierre manifested remarkable powers of assimilation and thought, although his radical and independent tendencies augured ill for his worldly success. At the age of eleven he had renounced orthodoxy, in consequence of having listened to a sermon that depicted too realistically the sufferings of the damned. Turning his back on the conception of a Divine Being who could torture his children so cruelly, he sought consolation in the works of Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and Voltaire. He launched into Epicureanism, and was only saved from embodying his new philosophy in a long poem, beginning :

"Heaven is only a little air, to which the sun gives colour,"

by the difficulty of finding a satisfactory rhyme to "colour." Obliged by poverty to leave school and go to work, he became a printer, but his mind refused to be chained to the mere routine of his trade. He invented a machine to diminish the labour

and expense of the compositor, which he called the " pianotype," for it was operated, like a piano, with a keyboard. But he saw much more than a mere money-saving device in his pianotype. By means of it thought was to be emancipated, liberal literature printed and disseminated, and a vast association formed all over the world, whose members would be able to correspond by means of a cipher. From the start, Pierre always thought in terms of the Universal ! His young brothers, infected with his enthusiasm, learned to be founders of type and machinists, in order to aid in manufacturing the pianotype that was to uplift humanity. But for lack of funds the invention was temporarily abandoned.

While Pierre continued his trade of printer, he did not relinquish his search for Truth. Turning his back on Epicureanism, he passed from the study of the great sceptics of the eighteenth century to the early Christian fathers, and from the heretical Christian sects of the Hussites, Wycliffites, Anabaptists and Taborites, who dreamed of reinstating the Christian religion in its pristine purity, and of freeing poor Satan from the ban of responsibility for the errors of mankind, to the teachers of the Greek and Oriental religions. He discovered that the truth he sought was the underlying basis of all religions, and gleaning the wisdom of the ages, proceeded to develop the great religion of the universe. He began to dream of establishing a cosmopolitan newspaper which should be devoted to preaching the Brotherhood of Man and the intellectual and spiritual union of nations. After a while he found an old school friend with a little capital and a great deal of faith, who helped him to realise his dream. He called the paper the *Globe*. As it offered a free platform to every lover of liberty in thought and opinion, the *Globe* had an immense success at first, but gradually politics shoved literature and philosophy out of its pages, and when the revolution of 1830 came, Leroux suddenly found himself alone ; his collaborators had all deserted to Lafayette and Louis Philippe, bribed by lucrative positions and honourable offices.

Looking about for an ally to whom to attach himself, Leroux concluded that the programme of the Saint-Simoniens was the only one that promised the economic reforms he sought. So

about the time that Aurore Dudevant arrived in Paris with her manuscript of *Aimée* and her painted boxes, the *Globe* had become a Saint-Simonien journal, with the motto, " To each according to his vocation ; to each according to his works " ; a motto that in the ripeness of experience Leroux later modified to, " each according to his capacities." Not content to spread his doctrines through his paper only, he went into the restaurants where working-men gathered, making converts among labourers and soldiers, and preaching a sort of peaceful social crusade, like a second Peter the Hermit. All went well until the day when Père Enfantin was inspired to unfold to the " Family " his revelation of the *rôle* of the emancipated woman and of the priest-couple. Much as he venerated the " weaker sex " and desired their emancipation, the cosmopolitan creed of Leroux did not welcome this particular method of rehabilitating the flesh. He rose in full meeting and tendered his resignation. " See there the man who cannot comprehend the universality of my words," said the Père Enfantin, pointing at him pityingly.

While George Sand and Planet were striving to solve the " social question " with the assistance of Michel, it occurred to her to consult Leroux about some of the socialist ideas she found it hard to accept. He was collaborating then with his friend Jean Reynaud on an *Encyclopédie Nouvelle*—a sort of dictionary of philosophy, wherein all religious and social questions were explained in terms of his universal system. She invited him to dine with her and to formulate for her, in a conversation of three-quarters of an hour, the republican catechism in such simple forms as a carpenter or a peasant, for example, could grasp. Leroux came, but was so embarrassed by the grave and reverent demeanour of his hostess that he was unable to simplify his ideas to the level of the carpenter's powers of apprehension. He left her inspired with an immense respect for his character, and decidedly attracted by his personality, but with her understanding of socialism more hazy than ever, and convinced that the good Pierre's head was the dupe of his heart. It took five years of study of the *Encyclopédie Nouvelle* and the *Livre de l'Humanité* before she was able to announce ; " If I have a drop of virtue in my veins, I owe it to him."

Leroux belonged to a gentler, less aggressive type of the people than Michel. He was an adaptor and gleaner, rather than an original thinker. He was impractical and dependent, where Michel was ambitious and dominating. In proportion as he was a greater idealist he was a weaker vessel. The cartoonists represented him as a vendor of balloons, climbing upon the platform of the National Assembly with his bunch of Socialist balloons, inscribed with such philosophical conundrums as " The me in the not-me is the Me." He was broad and heavy in build, with a large nose, prominent eyes, a little baggy under the lids, a plaintive droop to the corners of his mouth, and a small *gotee* under his lower lip. His hair was most remarkable ; long, thick, bushy, and frankly unkempt. His personal habits were those of the late lamented Planche, and when, like Planche, he made the mistake of offering the customary tribute of gallantry to Lélia's charm, he was, again like Planche, told to stand in his little niche and reserve his offerings for *amitié*. " Love of the soul, I admit," she replied, when questioned about Leroux ; " But I have never touched a hair of the lion's mane. I have no more relations with it than with the beard of the Great Turk."

The muddy boots and shabby, greasy coat of Pierre Leroux became a familiar ornament of Mme. Sand's salon, and his gentle voice and affectionate smile greeted her visitors, of whatever rank or creed. " Do you know the philosophical writings of Pierre Leroux ? " she asked everyone ; and she quoted Lamartine as saying that people would one day read the *Livre de l'Humanité* as they read *Le Contrat Social*. She bought his books in packages of twenty-five and distributed them ; she sent dozens of copies to people she thought sufficiently broad-minded to be appreciative, asking that they sell them to their friends. " I myself can read and comprehend them without fatigue," she said, " and I am merely a woman and a writer of novels." She read them aloud in her home, and adapted them to the understanding of Maurice and Solange. And she embodied his doctrines in her novels : the perfectibility and eternal progress of humanity, which he had taken from Leibnitz; the omnipresence of God in matter as well as spirit, which he had found in the heretical Christian sects and in the Greek

philosophers, before he discovered how Saint-Simon had adapted it to modern needs ; immortality through successive and progressive reincarnations, which he had imbibed in his studies of Oriental and theosophical teachings. Above all, Christian Socialism, or Communism, as it was beginning to be called. " I prefer to call it *Communionism*," said Leroux. " Several ridiculous doctrines which are masquerading under the name of *Communism* are making it odious. *Communionism* is a better term for a social system founded on fraternity ; that is to say, the principle of equality between the weak and the strong, obtained through a voluntary diminishment of the power of the strong for the profit of the weak. After all, the name is of small importance ! "

But the cautious Buloz thought the name mattered a great deal. He was getting restive under the continually stronger doses of Leroux's social and religious ideas that Mme. Sand was putting into her novels : reincarnation and the responsibility of disembodied souls for their descendants, in *Les Sept Cordes de la Lyre ;* workmen's unions and the abolition of caste, in *La compagnon du Tour de France ;* progressive development out of creeds and dogmas to pure and universal truth in *Spiridion.* What sort of pabulum was this to offer the subscribers to his review ? Here, for instance, was the manuscript of *Spiridion.*

" *So, father, we are no longer Catholics ?* "

" *Nor Christians,*" *answered Père Alexis with a firm voice ;* " *nor Protestants ; nor philosophers like Voltaire and Diderot ; we are not even Socialists like Jean-Jacques and the French Convention. And yet we are neither Pagans nor Atheists.*"

" *What are we then, Father Alexis ? You have said that we have a soul. God exists, and we must have a religion.*"

" *We have one,*" *he cried, rising, and lifting his lean arms to heaven :* " *We have the only true one ; we believe in Divinity ; we hope in it ; we love it.*"

" Now what do you make of that ? " muttered Buloz. " Is it Lamennais, or Leroux, corrected by Lamennais ? "

The dedication was illuminating ; it was to Pierre Leroux.

" Friend and brother in years ; father and master in virtue and knowledge, accept this tale of mine, not as a work worthy

of dedication to you, but in witness of my affection and veneration."

The larger part of *Spiridion*, that is, all the philosophical parts, were his; George had supplied the romantic setting, Gothic cloisters, fantastic visions, ghosts;—and the "human interest," the doubts, discouragements and persecutions of the monk Alexis in his pursuit of truth was unmistakably taken from life, from the actual experiences of the Abbé Lamennais. During her intimacy with Liszt, George had raised Lamennais to the rank of one of her saints, and, in spite of his failure to reciprocate her admiration, she continued to protest her devotion to his character and his beliefs. He was, she confessed, still too much a priest at heart, to sympathise with women's problems and ambitions. When he started a journal of Liberal and Socialist tendencies, called *Le Monde*—as Leroux's had been named *Le Globe*—he was glad to accept the *éclat* of her collaboration, as long as she confined herself to harmless articles on art and poetry. But when she began the *Lettres à Marcia* he made it plain to her that free discussion of love, marriage and divorce were not acceptable to *Le Monde*. The *Lettres à Marcia* ceased abruptly, and George's collaboration languished. The Abbé was equally cold towards the liberties with his person and beliefs as depicted in her new philosophical novel, and did not relish the nickname of "Spiridion" he suddenly acquired.

Buloz, too, protested in strong terms. He had already dropped Leroux as a contributor because he brought him articles on God. "But God—you see Leroux; that subject lacks actuality." The editor wanted good love stories for his review; not all this mystical, heretical, Communist stuff. Much pressure had to be exerted before he consented to accept *Spiridion*. George acknowledged that it was out of place in a periodical whose readers preferred stories that the lady's maids could enjoy as well as their mistresses. She promised to write a nice little story for him every other time, and meanwhile she sought for nice little plots into which to stuff her philosophical pills. "Let him weep hot tears over my 'mysticism,' but get the *Compagnon* in at all hazards," she wrote.

But the *Compagnon* stuck fast too; Buloz refused to swallow

it except at the price of drastic modifications. This story depicted the love of a high-born lady for a handsome carpenter who was repairing her father's château, and her consequent conversion to Communism. It required more than the elimination of the obnoxious word to reassure Buloz ; the book bristled with freemasonry ideas, labour organisation, and the exaltation of the people as the depositories of Divine Wisdom. But he had paid in advance, and once more George was victorious. *Horace* was the rock upon which they finally split. He refused to be brow-beaten this time ; the story was frankly indecent as well as revolutionary. Leroux advised her to break with the *Revue des Deux Mondes* once for all.

" For a long time you, like myself, have felt cramped in this miserable shop where so many ignoble bargains are concluded, and where literature is prostituted to the will of Buloz. You escape all suspicion by your greatness. But your reputation and your character lose by it. Many people have asked me how you can continue to write for the *Revue*."

There remained the financial side to consider. Leroux, who had no head for business, volunteered to find a publisher for *Horace*, and, partly to give him a chance to earn a little money, George appointed him her business agent. She wound up her affairs with the *Revue des Deux Mondes* promptly, and began to plan for a cheap popular edition of her books, with illustrations. The pictures as well as the price, she hoped, would attract and at the same time educate the proletariate for whom, hitherto, her books had been inaccessible on account of their high price. But she had reckoned without Buloz. He had the right to republish all of her writings that had appeared in his review ; a lawsuit followed and George was forced to pay a high price for the privilege of educating the people.

Leroux as a business agent was less dazzling than as a prophet. Perrotin, a publisher whom he summoned for a consultation, was surprised that the celebrated novelist should trust her affairs to such an extraordinary and shabby person. He found her agent in a bare and comfortless room, where a chair and a bed offered the only choice of seats. " What will you pay Mme. Sand for her new novel in four volumes ? " demanded Leroux. " Why, the usual price : five hundred francs a

volume." "But, man, there are four volumes." "That is the regular price," repeated Perrotin, thinking that Mme. Sand's representative had an exaggerated opinion of the value of her work. "Two thousand francs for a mere *no-vel!*" shouted Leroux, throwing up his hands; "For a work of the imagination! A novel is not worth *that*. I will tell Mme. Sand so. That is not good sense."

Horace proved difficult to place; Buloz was not the only editor who shied at communism. Meanwhile, Pierre Leroux was in need of financial assistance and of an outlet for his philosophy. The *Encyclopédie Nouvelle* had met the fate of most purveyors of novelties to a dull and perverse generation, and expired for want of readers. George discovered that her friend, Louis Viardot, who was also a convert to Christian Socialism, stood ready to finance a new journal for him. "*Tiens!*" she said; "I will give *Horace* to the new review. That will help to bring him subscribers." She was quite right; *Horace* would have been a "best-seller" anywhere; it is good reading, even to-day. It lent great *éclat* to the début of the *Revue Indépendante*, as the new review was called—in rebuke to Buloz's review, which was *not* independent. It depicted *la vie de Bohème* in the student quarter of Paris as Aurore Dudevant saw it when she was the collaborator of Jules Sandeau, and everybody, particularly her Berry friends, recognised acquaintances in it. "My hero must be a very common and faithfully drawn type," was Mme. Sand's comment, "since so many people think that they see themselves in him, and have become my mortal enemies in consequence!"

Truly Horace was a very delightful person, as the tenderness with which his little weaknesses were condoned by his friends testified, but he was somewhat composite in constitution. Like Jules Sandeau, he made up in charm and grace what he lacked in perseverance, expecting to create literature without exertion, as the brook murmurs or the nightingales sing, and rarely getting beyond the title and first chapter or strophe or scene of the many novels, poems and dramas he began. Like Alfred de Musset, he had an excess of—not egoism, perhaps—let us say personality, and his delicately adjusted nervous organisation was subject to distressing *crises*

of hysteria, and he was bored and cruel when his mistress looked ill or sad. Like Eugène Pelletan, one of Maurice Sand's tutors, he was dismissed after having paid court to his pupil's mother, and like Mallefille, Pelletan's successor, he was vain of his luxuriant hair and beard, and wrote a play that was hissed at the *Ambigu*. Like Balzac, he piled up debts at the tailor's in the expectation of enormous receipts from his novels, set up his own carriage, affected flamboyant waistcoats and bizarre fashions in dress, had a weakness for titled ladies, and added a " de " to his name after his first literary success. And like George Sand's young friend Emmanuel Arago, having tried both politics and literature, and been less successful in either than his talents and his expectations promised, he decided to stick to law, and returned home to practise in the provinces.

Vainly did George deny that she had been guilty of anything so inartistic as to draw her characters from life. No one failed to recognise the " white Arabella " in the green-eyed Léonie, who passed for a beauty on the credit of her superb hair and her *chic* clothes, and passed for clever because she uttered commonplaces with such distinction that people mistook them for *esprit*, and discussed politics with such apparent intelligence that none perceived that she was handing out the fruit of her last night's reading. It was surprising to see George Sand, generally so big-hearted and free from feminine jealousies, trample savagely on the forsaken Mme. d'Agoult (Liszt's affection having been transferred to Germany, she had returned to Paris alone). The key was perhaps in these lines :

" Horace," I cried, " Léonie does not love you ! She has never loved anything. She will never love anyone. SHE DOES NOT LOVE HER CHILDREN ! "

The unpardonable sin in George Sand's Bible was indifference to the duties of maternity. It was the only one she could not forgive in her revered Rousseau, who had put all his children in foundling asylums, and then written that wise handbook on parenthood, *Émile*. She could condone the numerous gallantries of Mme. Hortense Allart de Méritens because of her tenderness for the offspring of her fleeting amours ; but the Countess d'Agoult, who abandoned five children (two legitimate and three of Liszt's) " taking no more notice of them

than if they had been a litter of kittens," was freely delivered up to satire.

The Abbé Lamennais, whose delicate, thoughtful face was acquiring certain fretful lines indicative of an embittered disposition, said hard things about the new review and its contents.

" Have you read the *Revue Indépendante*," he wrote to his friend the Baron de Vitrolles (although he desired to be buried with the paupers, the Abbé belonged to the aristocracy); " Aguado has only contributed twenty thousand francs to it. Thirty more were furnished or collected by this poor Viardot who will soon see the end of it. For the first edition alone, Leroux has gone through fifteen thousand francs. Their God, it is the Universal Life. And what is this Universal Life? And how are we going to understand what they say about this Universal Life? . . . I would be somewhat consoled if their review were at least amusing, for the sake of the new religion, for everything that could raise a laugh in this bored generation would have a chance of success, but unfortunately I am not assured of that." Meanwhile, he regretted to say, Mme. Sand was preaching communism in a touching tale of the amours of a student and a virtuous grisette, in which there was little trace of her former talent. Soon they would be told that Jesus Christ had formally authorised adultery! It was the Waterloo of communism, as he conceived it, and all he asked was to be forgotten by " those people "; he dreaded their indifference less than their adherence.

It was clear that the people who had once flocked to the *Porte Saint-Martin* to see *Marion Delorme* had not really grasped the profound morality of that epoch-making drama, since they adhered to their old errors about the inequality of the sexes and the double standards of virtue for men and women. It was not the society of prostitutes and loose young gentlemen and their mistresses that scandalised the readers of *Horace*. Mme. Sand had a chaste mind, and all these matters were very delicately handled. The shocking thing was a Saint-Simonien grisette declaiming on the sanctity of unions based on love and conscience, rather than on civil and religious rites, and preaching the regeneration of society through Woman. The menace

of corruption lay in the steadfast and virtuous young artist-writer (a pupil of Maurice's painting master, Delacroix) who consecrated his evenings to the study of religion, nature and society, as explained by Fouriérism, Republicanism, Saint-Simonism, and Christianity in turn; who venerated Lamennais and read the *Revue Indépendante*, attended the meetings of the *Amis du Peuple* under the leadership of Godefroy de Cavaignac, and added to his pack of wicked socialist aphorisms the theory that the sins of frail woman were attributable to society rather than to evil inclinations.

Sainte-Beuve, who was among the alienated, was less disturbed by the deterioration of Mme. Sand's morals than that of her talents. Forgetting that he had once pointed out Leroux to her as a man of vision (my Bible, George told him, is composed of you and Lamennais and Leroux), he sulked over the creation of a rival to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and their friendship suffered a partial eclipse. He excused himself from coming to see her, on the ground that he feared to meet people he did not like in her salon. Her defection to the side of socialism and the working-man's interests had introduced her to a bizarre society that the delicate and well-modulated tastes of the elegant little *garçon* found uncongenial. He agreed with Lamennais that her literary ability suffered from this low company.

"As to the past which you regret," George wrote him, "I do not know what you mean. My heart has not changed; my mind has become more tranquil, that is all. Is it because this tranquillity has taken away my talents, as people about you say? Is it only that? It is a small thing to lose or to gain a talent! What one must not lose is the memory of friendship."

They took a walk in the Bois and endeavoured to re-baptise their friendship. But the second phase was decidedly a failure. Sainte-Beuve perceived that his place in the trinity of her Bible was greatly reduced; he abdicated to Leroux.

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Meanwhile the light of the prophet's torch was in danger of extinction in the base struggle for existence. In spite of a fair amount of success, the *Revue Indépendante* was overwhelmed with debts; money had a magic faculty of melting away in

Leroux's hands. A large and helpless family circle was dependent upon him; to his own nine children, legacy from two wives, were added a large contingent of brothers, sisters-in-law, and their offspring, making a patriarchal community of from twelve to thirty persons who looked to the distracted prophet for support. That absence of economic foresight which is the distinctive quality of the seer, was retarding the evolution of the new religion. George flew to the rescue and thousands of francs flowed from her coffers through the holes in Pierre's pockets, in order to keep the light burning without which the disciples would be left in darkness with an incomplete revelation. Mme. Marliani, wife of the Spanish consul in Paris, who was an enthusiastic and warm-hearted collector of philosophical curios, emptied her purse for the support of the new religion. She and Mme. Sand at one time considered adopting some of Leroux's children, but were discouraged by his proud independence. Time, however, and adversity tamed this pride; it is the weakness of seers to fall back upon the assumption that the world owes genius a living! By dint of brooding on the inequalities of property in this mismanaged society, the honest Leroux arrived at the point where he was not entirely clear where the line between *mine* and *thine* should be drawn. Some of his good friends enjoyed relating how, when dining with them at a restaurant, he had absent-mindedly pocketed the change from the hundred franc note with which his host had paid the waiter, murmuring, "Are you going to do anything with this money, Bertrand?" In the same way he doubted if his creditors had much use for the money they loaned him, although, when he contemplated the sum total of his debts, he acknowledged that, from his own point of view, it was exceedingly sad. He owed a certain M. Fabas five or six thousand francs. "Happily he is rich and I have been useful to him!" Béranger, who was complaining because, after having advanced four thousand francs on a history of Napoleon that Leroux was to write over Béranger's signature, the history was not forthcoming, was very unreasonable. If he would wait patiently until Leroux had completed several philosophical works which must be attended to first, under the imperious dictates of genius, the history would be written in

due time. Viardot, who had advanced him five or six thousand francs, would be covered if the books sold! Mme. Marliani had loaned him three thousand francs (and what were three thousand francs after all, if they were not in payment for a mere *no-vel?*) " out of the kindness of her heart "; it was easy to see that such a debt could not demand material return. And that was all. Mme. Sand's thousands never troubled him. She was his protector; his oracle. " *I* only *consult* God; it is you who reply. If I ever attain saint-hood, it will be through you," he wrote her. Only once did she fail him and that was when, having used his last cent in travelling to Nohant to borrow from her, he found her away from home. The disgrace of being obliged to ask for aid of her friend Duteil, in his extremity, even though it was in her name, deprived the honest man of all peace of mind!

" Ah, my dear friend, this question of poverty! The whole problem of existence is there, in riches, in the material exchange, in the *value* of things," cried this poor harassed prophet.

And George never swerved from her faith and her sympathy. She listened patiently to his complaints and poured out her consolation, philosophical and pecuniary, ungrudgingly. She even forgot that she had given anything, or denied it when accused. " Something must be done about it! " her friends whispered; " he will ruin her." But she went quietly on, feeding her novels, without recompense, to the expiring *Revue Indépendante* and cheerfully meeting the shortages when they were presented to her. *Consuelo* and its sequel, *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*, her longest and, from one point of view, her most important novels, were her last contribution. While writing them she lived for several months up to her eyes in Rosicrucian and Freemasonry literature. Their theme was that of the " sacerdotal *rôle* of the artist," so dear to Franz Liszt, and of Leroux's doctrine of immortality through eternally ascending reincarnations. Those who had the patience to endure to the end acquired a vast amount of curious and valuable information about eighteenth century music, occultism, secret societies and heretical sects. But the leisurely reader was rare, even in those days. " I have read the first part of *Consuelo;* don't speak to me of the second," exclaimed the exhausted Planche. Even

Consuelo could not save the *Revue*. Another journal must be created to carry on the message of Pierre Leroux.

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The misfortunes of a little half-witted waif called Fanchette were the occasion of the institution of the *Eclaireur de l'Indre*. Little Fanchette had proved an inconvenient charge to a society of nuns who conducted a *hospice* near La Châtre, and was purposely and inhumanly " lost " by the sisters, as one would drop a bag of helpless kittens by the wayside. When she finally turned up again, she had been so brutalised by the company she had kept in her wanderings that the affair became a public scandal. The church and town authorities tried to hush it up and Mme. Sand dedicated her talents to giving it all possible publicity. Since the local papers refused to reopen the subject, she printed at her own expense the story of Fanchette, carefully verified by the testimony of several concerned, and sold the pamphlet for the benefit of the victim. She narrowly escaped a suit for libel as a result, but her indignation at the government's control of the Berry journal found an outlet. " Why can't we have a journal of our own ? " she proposed to Duvernet. She followed up the suggestion by a dinner party, to which Duvernet, Fleury, Néraud and Planet were bidden, and after a substantial Berrichon banquet, they constituted themselves a " Committee of Public Safety " to consider the proposition. The committee was lively and efficient. Planet asked for the floor more than two hundred times and made more than three hundred motions ; Fleury, crimson with excitement, lost his temper more than ten times ; Duteil remained as calm as Fate, and Néraud asked a great many irrelevant questions. Finally they decided on a programme, made a budget for which each patriot was taxed according to the degree of his enthusiasm, and the *Eclaireur de l'Indre* was born. It was a whole year before it was in condition to appear in public, and in the meantime George was indefatigable in preparing programmes, circulars and confessions of faith. The completion of *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt* was considerably retarded, but the cause was good.

The first shadow of a misunderstanding that ever came between George and the " Berry bunch " arose from this paper.

Her good friends were alarmed lest the fortunes of the new journal become involved with those of Pierre Leroux. George was known to be in Paris searching for an editor. It was rumoured that a youthful protégé of hers and of Leroux's, named Victor Borie, had been considered for the place. Leroux's connection with the enterprise would be fatal and the gentle Duvernet was deputed to convey to her as delicately as possible that the Committee of Public Safety would be grateful if she were not too active in its affairs. Tact was not a quality by which Mme. Sand set much store, and she was frankly surprised at such manœuvres to crowd her out of her own enterprise.

" You are nothing but silly children ! " she wrote. " You have neither the courage to accept nor to reject me. One would think that the *Eclaireur de l'Indre* was the consulate of the Republic and that I had wanted to bring about an Eighteenth Brumaire. Take what editor you prefer or get it printed yourselves if you wish. I shan't be hurt and I need no concessions from you in order to remain your friend. You have taken away all my enthusiasm with your chicaneries, but I love you all the same."

Of course, after this little flurry, they took an editor meekly from her hands, but it was not Leroux nor his disciple. The concession also was freely made ; the journal was to be printed on Leroux's famous pianotype, now installed in a sort of socialist colony at Boussac, where men, women and even the small children, all took part in the work of the press. Naturally, the editor of the new paper was asked to pay for the printing greatly in advance. The pianotype had already cost Mme. Sand ten thousand francs, and still Leroux was in serious straits, and peevish because existence was so difficult. For the first time, she admitted a flaw in her idol. " Was there ever anyone to whom more had been given, trusted, forgiven ? My heart is broken ; I have done all I can for him and *more*."

The prophet's light is always dependent for oil on the faithfulness of a few devoted women. The feminine mind is less blinded by prejudice and less keen for the material values than the masculine. Leroux had predicted a large *rôle* for them in his reconstructed universe. And when reason revolts, they

have always vast wells of sentiment on which to draw. Notwithstanding her increasing doubt of Leroux's ever being able to free himself from money entanglements sufficiently to complete the revelation of his universal system of philosophy, Mme. Sand continued, quite secretly, to send him subsidies.

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She had quite outstripped Michel now in her progress toward Socialism. Equality of goods and universal suffrage were but steps in the right direction. The gospel of Pierre taught that the people were the true depositories of divine wisdom and should be consulted by governments desirous of enlightenment and direction. This promise of oracular gifts seemed to be in some degree confirmed by the remarkable efflorescence of the proletarian artisan poets. The veteran poet of the people, Béranger, had already revived the *mode* of Hans Sachs, and, crowned with the laurels of a Liberal Bard, had improved greatly on the humble muse of the cobbler poet. The French nation has always responded to the call of the *mode* and poets now sprung up in all the trades ; a carpenter in Fontainebleau, a hairdresser in Gascony, a tailor in Nevers, a clerk in a Rouen store, a baker in Nîmes, a weaver in Lézy-sur-Ourcqs, a shoemaker in Paris. People interested in this kind of phenomenon were daily discovering new instances and announcing them in print. George Sand, with her enthusiasm for ascending souls, cordially held out the hand of fellowship to them all. They opened an immense horizon to the possibilities of ennobling labour. She suggested collecting a volume of poems to be called *Les Chansons de chaque Métier*, in which each trade should be treated poetically.

Most of these rhymes were remarkable only in relation to their source, and in the same degree as Dr. Johnson's famous dog standing on his hind-legs—the wonder was that they could do it at all ! But in Charles Poncy, a young Provençal mason who had felt his call to be a poet when he read Racine's *Athalie*, and composed verses on social themes while wielding his trowel on the housetops of Toulouse, Mme. Sand detected real talent. She particularly praised one of his early poems, entitled *On the Roofs*, in which he reflected on the mysteries, the crimes and tragedies that might be hidden away under his

feet, and on the impregnable walls that divided hearts and sympathies, as well as families, from each other. There was another that she liked, *Winter Among the Rich*, which lamented that the season that filled the theatres and ballrooms with the rich, also filled morgues and dissecting rooms with the less fortunate classes. Always ready to overlook blemishes if the effort was honest, she put Poncy's verses in the *Revue* and heralded the new school in several articles. One must not expect perfection from the popular poets, she said, nor require them to be entirely original; even better artists seek their inspiration in others! Nor was the form important. The people have not *esprit;* they take their ideas as they come to them, but their thoughts are great because they rest on the principle of eternal justice which has been stored away in their hearts, while society has forgotten its very meaning.

When Poncy published his first volume of poems she wrote him, "My child, you are a great poet; the most inspired and best endowed of all the fine proletarian poets we have seen rise in these latter days. You can be the greatest poet in France one day if vanity, which ruins all our bourgeois poets, does not enter your noble heart. Take care, noble child of the people! You have a mission, greater perhaps than you realise."

She bought many copies of his little volume to distribute among her friends, and she wrote him long letters full of good advice. She especially discouraged any departure from his own *genre*, such as love poems to "Juana l'Espagnole" and other imaginary beauties. "Are you a bourgeois or a proletarian poet?" If the latter, why quit the chaste breast of his wife to run after Bayadières? Equally, she repressed his "meridional enthusiasm" when he addressed poetical tributes to her. They were inappropriate. "I have a very repressed nature, very cold, externally; very reflective and silent." She wrote a preface for his second book of verses, in which she pointed out the straight and narrow path that the people's poets must follow. "Go, proletarian poets, to your work; find the social, religious, and political laws which will unite all interests in one. Your friends, who can do nothing to-day, will find a way to make you sit down at the banquet of Equality."

Under all this encouragement Poncy improved his technique

greatly, but he forgot her injunctions about sticking to his *genre*. He threw away his trowel, and became secretary of the Chamber of Commerce in Toulon. He ended as a well-to-do bourgeois.

Not all of the proletarian poets were so progressive. The good old weaver Magu wrote all his verses in honour of his faithful wife, who bore him fourteen children, and remained a weaver all his days, which were many. Although he could tell of the fine ladies in satin dresses who had visited him and his Joan in their humble cabin, he died in the greatest poverty, amid the four medals and seven framed diplomas of the learned societies of which he had been made an honorary member. Mme. Sand had written prefaces for Magu too, and she kept him supplied with tobacco as long as he lived. His son-in-law Gilland, a locksmith, was another of her *protégés*, and still another was Agricole Perdiguier, an intelligent carpenter, who was the prototype of the hero of *La Compagnon du Tour de France*. The rule of the *Devoir* or workman's fraternity to which he belonged required him to make periodical journeys through France in order to keep in touch with other members of his trade. He utilised these journeys by calling together the working men of all *Devoirs* in the towns through which he passed, exhorting them to abandon their jealousies and rivalries, and work towards union and self-improvement. The little book he wrote about his travels and the organisation of the different *devoirs*, served as the basis of George's socialist novel.

All these people were guests at Nohant from time to time, where they occupied a little pavilion in her garden which she used for the overflow from the hospitable mansion. In their company her habitual shyness and reserve disappeared at once ; she was gay and at ease with them. Their work, their ambitions, their family affairs and babies, all were of vital interest to her. Balzac, returning from a trip to Russia a violent anti-communist, tried to blow up with his jests and arguments this " Philosophico- republico- communistico- Pierre Leroux-ico-Germanico- Deisto- Sandique-*train*." But more and more clearly she saw that from her cradle she had been a proletarian, and not the descendant of a lady allied to the royal house of

Bourbon. Even her inability to understand the management of her Nohant acres, which had disheartened poor old Deschartres, was attributed to her inherited contempt for landed property. In her regret at not being able to reconcile her communist principles with her maternal solicitude for the future material welfare of her children (to whom landed property would perhaps not be objectionable), she multiplied her generosity and tenderness towards these less favoured members of society; prefaces, reviews, subsidies and encouragement of all sorts. She put them in her books, and she found time, amid all her activities, to carry on a voluminous correspondence with them.

It was difficult to convince dull bourgeois minds that these strange intimacies with potential revolutionists were disinterested. Mme. Sand was charged with having subsidised Perdiguier's *Tour de France* in order to get material for her socialist novel. When her poor young friend, Gilland, the locksmith, was tried—and acquitted—as an anarchist, she was accused of having written his revolutionary books. All this was very annoying but not in the least disheartening. She continued to preach socialism in the *Eclaireur de l'Indre*, in the form of letters to the people on simple topics and in the language of simple folk, under the pseudonym of *Blaise Bonnin*. A peasant, was Blaise Bonnin, and he took his ideas from the first great Christian Socialist who had said: "*Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes; the meek shall inherit the earth; sell all that thou hast and give to the poor.*" Unfortunately, many people felt that it was hardly safe to scatter these pearls of truth too rashly before those who were not yet able to digest them. The good people of Berry were slow in giving their support to the *Eclaireur de l'Indre*. After a year and a half of precarious existence, it quietly died. George Sand assisted Leroux to start a *Revue Sociale* but it had the same fate. The stiff-necked bourgeois hostility to the doctrines of progress and perfectibility proved an obstacle too strong for even her generous pen and purse to undermine.

But the flame of her faith burned steadfastly. "I no longer have to seek my opinions; they are all clear in my mind. I

no longer have to fight my doubts ; they are dissipated like the rain clouds before the light of conviction. I no longer have to evoke my sentiments ; they speak warmly within me and impose silence on every doubt, on all literary vanity, on all fear of ridicule. All this has come from philosophy ; from a certain philosophy, the only clear and sensible one for me, because it is the only one that is as complete as the human soul is up to the present time."

She did not claim that it was the last word. Revelation had not ceased on earth. It is the mistake of great thinkers to want to build for eternity, instead of understanding that man has only to put up tents for his own generation.

CHAPTER XII

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE

"Love is a temple which he who loves builds for an object more or less worthy of his worship, and what is most beautiful about it is not the idol, but the altar. Why fear to risk? Even if the idol is broken, the pretty temple is there for a refuge in which the divinity may be renewed; its pedestal is still there."

In 1838 the Balearic Islands had not been discovered by the English tourists, nor had Blasco Ibañez made them famous in *The Dead Command*. The few and uncomfortable coasting steamers that occasionally called at Majorca, the largest of the three islands, did not tempt the traveller in search of safe and pleasant vacations, for the one hundred and thirty-five miles of Mediterranean that lay between the Balearics and the coast of Spain can be very tempestuous on a windy night. There were no hotels in Palma, the largest port; no villas to let, no antiquity shops, and little to encourage visitors.

But commerce smooths the roughest course. The Majorcans, who were not blessed with the thrift and progressive inclinations of their Catalan neighbours, and were not disposed to struggle overmuch with the rocky and sterile soil of their mountainous little island, suddenly discovered in the raising and exportation of pigs a sure and easy source of wealth. That the transportation of these precious products might be more expeditious and less perilous, a neat little steamer was purchased, which made the trip between Palma and Barcelona once a week, weather permitting, carrying a cargo of two hundred pigs and, incidentally, a few human passengers. The latter, being of secondary importance to the pigs, were confined to their cabins, and the decks were dedicated to the uses of the grunting, squealing, seasick cargo, with their accompanying perfume. But let no one despise the harmless, necessary pig. He has brought fame and civilisation to the Balearic Islands, erected

hotels of moderate comfort, and turned the lovely old half-Arabic, half-Gothic palaces and halls of that doughty Conquistador, Jaime the First, into National Monuments, where postcards and guide books may be purchased. So rapidly has the far-flung line of the tourist agency extended since 1838!

One morning, in November of this epoch-making year, the little steamer, having made a smooth passage, deposited its first party of tourists on the landing-place of Palma; a fair delicate young man, wrapped in shawls; an active, dark-skinned little woman, inclining to a becoming embonpoint; two children and a maid; together with a formidable pile of boxes, rugs and parcels. The inhospitable Majorcans went about their leisurely business, whatever it was, quite unaware that their peaceful island was being discovered by celebrities, that history was being made, and that in the years to come, sentimental pilgrims from all over the world would climb the rocky road that led to the abandoned convent of Valdemosa, to see the cell where Chopin lived with George Sand.

But if the Majorcans held out no welcoming hand to the distinguished visitors, Nature at least smiled her prettiest. The sea was blue, the sky was blue, the sun shone warm and golden on the splendid thirteenth century Castle Belver that towered above them, and on the lovely old cathedral at whose feet the waves broke in a soft silvery spray. The ravished artists, half-blinded by the radiant sunshine, fancied they saw forests of aloes and palms, and orchards of oranges and lemons and pomegranates peeping over every crumbling old Arab wall, and graceful cavaliers in picturesque costumes strumming guitars under every vine-draped balcony. What poetry! What solitude! What a spot for a honeymoon!

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This union of two élite, artistic souls, so strongly impelled towards one another but so hopelessly divided in sympathies, tastes and traditions, had not been accomplished without considerable hesitation on both sides. The period of storms was over for George Sand; she was done with the sufferings and convulsions of Romantic Love. She had no further desire to *live poetry*. Purified and uplifted by the gospel of Pierre

Leroux, she was placidly chasing butterflies and collecting botanical specimens with her children, and in the entirely satisfactory companionship of Maurice's latest tutor, Félicien Mallefille, a gentle spirit on whose malleable mind she had put the print of her seal. Even so adventurous a soul as hers quailed before the prospect of a fresh encounter with the waywardness of genius. On his side, too, the sensitive fastidious young Chopin had to overcome a painful revulsion which he had experienced when first presented by Franz Liszt to the celebrated novelist. He carried away from the musical soirée where they had met, a very disagreeable impression of her dark, sombre face, her abrupt, emphatic manner of speech, her unconventional bearing and her familiar " tutoying " of the men about her. " That woman is horribly antipathetic to me." he said. But Chopin was sickly, lonely, and suffering from a heart-wound that needed consolation. Something big and generous and maternal in this extraordinary woman ended in sweeping him off his feet, if this phrase can be applied to so reserved and formal a nature. Upon his *confidant* and compatriot, Albert Gryzmala, devolved the delicate office of adjusting this paradoxical situation. To each his confidant ! Sandeau had his Regnault ; de Musset his Tattet ; Michel his Girerd ; Chopin his Gryzmala !

To the serviceable Gryzmala Mme. Sand confessed her consternation at the way this little creature Chopin had affected her. " I must still be much more impressionable than I supposed. I am so accustomed to live with men, without thinking that I am a woman, that I was taken by surprise," she said, referring to a rather warm demonstration that the little creature had made at their last meeting. " At the moment of my life when I believed myself calm and fixed for eternity, I have fallen into actual infidelity of heart."

Chopin, too, might he not have been guilty of infidelity of heart, or was he entirely cured of his unhappy passion for the young Polish girl whose romance with him had been so cruelly interrupted by the ambitions of her worldly parents ? After all, George knew so little of his nature ; only the side the sun lighted up ! But in case that his heart, like hers, could harbour two very different affections at the same time, one that was, so to

speak, the body of life, and the other the soul, there might be a perfectly satisfactory adjustment. On the other hand, if, as she was beginning to suspect was true in her own case, he had recognised that love was an inextinguishable flame that tends ever to mount higher and purify itself, leaving behind the imperfect in its search for the perfect, it was quite possible that their union might be less complex and more complete.

And in order that there might be no misunderstanding as to her theories on the all-important relation, and the manner in which they had influenced her conduct in the past, she summed them up frankly in a long, very long letter to Chopin's Pylade, for discreet presentation to his friend.

" I have known many kinds of love ; the woman's love, mother-love, sister-love, nun's love, poet's love. Some have been born and died in me the same day, without being revealed to the object that inspired them. Some have martyrised my life. . . . My soul entered these different phases as the sun enters the signs of the zodiac." She was a lover of the beautiful, hungry for truth, sensitive in heart, weak in judgment, she explained, but always sincere and never sensual or unfaithful. In each case she had been brought one step nearer God, who was the source of love. If heaven had intended her to be faithful always to one affection, why, she asked, had it allowed its angels, personified in this ethereal young musician, to wander in her path ?

She realised perfectly the disparity between herself and this wandering angel. He was an aristocrat, by taste and tradition ; she was of the people and her sympathies were with them. He was a conservative in religion and politics ; she was a radical. He liked luxury, grandeur and the excitement of city life ; she loved the country and simple, rustic things.

But she was able to respect in those she loved what she could not comprehend, and without doubt he could be equally tolerant. Under these circumstances she would arrange their poem thus :

" I would know nothing of his positive life nor he of mine ; he would pursue his religious, worldly, poetic, artistic ideals without my ever questioning him about them, and I would

enjoy reciprocal freedom in the exercise of my beliefs and tastes. But at some moment we would meet and our souls would be at the apogee of happiness and excellence. One is not sublime every day, as one is not happy every day. We would not meet every day ; we would not possess the sacred fire every day ; but there would be fine days and holy flames." Only, in this event, she would require ample notice when he was coming to Nohant, so that she could send Mallefille to Geneva or Paris on some pretext.

There was one more question, presented with equal frankness and good faith to the diplomatic intercession of Gryzmala ; this was the question of possession or non-possession. Aurore Dudevant had learned by a sad and early experience that incompleted love was incomplete love. But Chopin had already implied that his reverence for her was so exalted that he feared to soil their love by yielding to the transports of physical passions.

" This way of regarding it is repugnant to me ; the word physical love is repellent. The divine mystery, the act of life that is the most serious and most sublime, the law to which even animals and plants and minerals are obedient, should not be regarded as a shameful necessity by man, who alone has received the holy gift of perceiving spiritually what they only feel materially. The body and the spirit cannot be separated."

If the prudent Gryzmala really presented all the contents of this exceedingly valuable document to Chopin, it is improbable that his friend was able to comprehend it. Chopin was an artist, not a philosopher, and his knowledge of the *nuances* of the French language was almost as limited as his powers of abstract thought. He was inexperienced in the formulas of St. Simonism, although he later became able to listen quietly and with apparent enjoyment to Leroux's doctrines when presented in simple terms for the comprehension of Maurice. The important thing for him, and the only one he probably concerned himself with, was that there *was* to be a poem. In the course of the summer of 1838, therefore, George made a " sacrifice to love," and sent Mallefille to Havre with Solange. She went at the same time, to Paris. " Say nothing to the

little one about it," she wrote Gryzmala ; " we will give him a surprise ! "

The continuation of the poem demanded greater privacy and more sacrifices. Chopin was timid and secretive, and in continual anxiety lest his parents in Poland, or his rich patrons, or his pupils, learn of his liaison. He wanted to escape from observation for a period, until he became accustomed to his new *rôle*. The Balearic Islands seemed to offer a fitting refuge. George had been longing to visit them for three years ; her Spanish acquaintances in Paris had praised their tropical charms to her and recommended them for a dry, sunny, mild winter climate. She thought it would be an excellent place for Maurice, who had rheumatism. Why not for Chopin, who had chronic bronchitis, also ?

There was strong opposition to this adventure on the part of some of Chopin's friends, chiefly Gryzmala, who feared the effect of life in these barbarous, unknown islands on the luxuriously and delicately nurtured young musician. What if he got sick ? How could he get on without a valet ? Did they have good doctors and coiffeurs there ? What about a piano ? For his genius must not be allowed to droop. Chopin hesitated, debated, doubted. Finally, George packed her boxes and started from Nohant. " You may join me at Perpignan if you decide to come ! "

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Still wafted by the pleasant zephyrs of faith in their Spanish informants and the poem about to be realised, the discoverers of the Balearic Islands succeeded, after some difficulty, in persuading a Majorcan gentleman to rent them his residence, sparsely furnished. The house, which was on the outskirts of Palma, had a charming name, *Son Vent*, " House of the Winds." But it was not the right season of the year for " Son Vent." Scarcely had they settled themselves when the strong winds of Majorca came down the funnel of the narrow pass between the mountains, and beat upon that house, and whistled up and down the steep sunless streets that wound like dark cracks between the tall, austere walls of the Palma palaces, and blew dense clouds of dust through the rattling window frames of " Son Vent." Then the autumn rains set in and deluged the

dank, mossy court, and the picturesque stone gallery and massive staircases dripped disconsolately, and the freshly white-washed walls absorbed the dampness like a sponge. Owing to the much vaunted mildness of the winters in Majorca, no chimneys were provided in the houses. A chill pall of humidity settled down upon the travellers and froze the very blood in their veins. The little Chopin caught cold and the smoke from a discouraged brazier which George installed in his room, in a futile effort to dry out " Son Vent," aggravated his cough. He soon began to spit blood and to run a temperature. The physicians of Palma were assembled and took the darkest possible view of the situation. He was already a dead man !

But it took more than the verdict of three Spanish doctors and a month of rain to quench the courage and ardour of George Sand. She was one of those strong souls that always rise to emergencies. To courage was added wrath. The inhabitants of Palma, so mediæval in their conceptions of comfort and the art of living, were, it appeared, extremely advanced in medical knowledge. Sanitation might be primitive, but their understanding of contagion and infection was almost ahead of their age. It was rumoured that the sick stranger was consumptive ; *ergo*, he was a menace to the whole island. The owner of " Son Vent " demanded the immediate evacuation of his property, with damages. No one else would consent to harbour the dangerous invalid. The pioneer tourists were *taboo*.

Very well, said George, we will arise and go to Valdemosa, far from this dirty, inhospitable little town. There is plenty of room for us there, splendid air and a magnificent view, a romantic setting, and a monk's cell, for thirty-five francs a year.

The vast rambling pile of the Carthusian monastery of Valdemosa crowned a lofty ridge of mountain only three miles away from them, and rose on a succession of terraced orchards and vineyards from the plain on which Palma lay among its soaked gardens and humid palaces. It had been closed two years before by order of the Spanish Government because it contained only thirteen monks. It was large enough to have sheltered the entire Office of the Inquisition and all its works, and then have room to spare. There were three cloisters of

different periods, a large baroque church and numerous sets of cells and chapels, adapted to the seasonal and religious requirements of the previous occupants. When the owners were dispossessed, some of the Palma families availed themselves of its breezy situation and low rentals, and took summer residence in the suites that the vanished Carthusians had called cells. But in the winter season it was abandoned to ghosts, bats and two or three stray specimens of humanity, relics of its former occupation, who nested in its nooks and eaves.

Chopin, coughing and shivering and swathed in poultices, rose gallantly to her support and echoed her enthusiasm. " To-morrow," he wrote his friend Fontana (at the same time sending letters to his parents to be mailed *in Paris*, wherein there was no mention of illness or of the Balearic Islands), " I shall move into a ravishing old ruined convent and shall inhabit the deserted cell of some old monk, who would seem to have been expelled from it expressly for my convenience, in the most beautiful and poetic spot in the world. The monk, perhaps, had fire in his soul, but was obliged to hide and suppress it."

A good deal of the romance of the fiery monk and his deserted habitation was shaken out by the long, rough ride up the mountain, in a native *birlocho* that jounced and jerked and almost capsized as it wandered up and down the rocky bed of a stream, dropped into deep ravines, or cavorted recklessly over bushes and walls—for road, properly speaking, there was none. The invalid reached the summit gasping, but still bravely hopeful, after a rough scramble on foot over the last part of the way, which was too rough and steep for even the much enduring *birlocho*. The coquettish sun consented to shine upon their arrival, to show how lovely the scene from their terrace could be under favourable conditions. The sky was lapis-lazuli, and the two far-away strips of sea on the horizon were like emerald. In the little square garden upon which their " cell " opened, roses and jasmine were blooming on the high walls that shut them in from the row of similar gardens beyond. In front of them the ground dropped in a succession of terraces planted with orange and lemon trees, to the plain of Establement, shimmering with century-old olive trees,

grotesque and distorted ; and behind them, above the roofs of the convent and the green-tiled campanile of the church, towered another wall of mountain, streaked with the slim dark spires of cypresses. Here indeed, was a paradise for poets !

George bustled about, disposing of the scanty furniture she had, by rare good fortune, been able to purchase for an exorbitant price from the evacuating tenant of another cell ; spreading Valencian straw mats and soft white sheepskins on the uneven clay floors of the three little rooms, which with two tiny alcoves (whose wooden shuttered windows opened on the long wide corridor that skirted one of the cloisters) composed the " cell " ; and giving picturesque touches here and there—a bit of Arab pottery on top of the tile stove, a gay plaid rug suspended as a portière, a high-backed carved Gothic seat, purloined from the church. She had the soul of a " camper " ; she loved picnics, and this was to her a glorified picnic, and a camp fit for a prince, not to say a luxurious musician. When Chopin's little Pleyel piano, which had been for weeks travelling from Marseilles and had met many adventures on the way, was at last safely hoisted up the steep incline, and its music filled the high vaults of their lofty eyrie, her cup of joy was brimming.

But the clouds soon rolled up again and the elements broke loose once more, and raged uninterruptedly for two dismal months. The fogs hung low upon Valdemosa day and night ; the wind shrieked and wailed in the ravines ; deluges of rain beat against the windows, and the slopes of the mountain streamed with foaming torrents. Cut off entirely from the outside world, the forlorn little colony cowered in the corner of the huge empty pile of deserted apartments and corridors, and listened to the strange sounds that cracked and banged and moaned in the mysterious, impenetrable precincts around and beneath them. Even worse than the obsessions and fears of the temperamental Chopin, was the battle for existence. Food, even of the poorest, was scarce, and very hard to get, while the storms rendered Palma inaccessible.

" If I live to be a hundred," said George, " I shall never forget my agitation over the arrival of a basket of food from Palma. For the first time in my life I knew what it was to be in great despair over small annoyances." To the difficulty of obtain-

ing provisions was added the impossibility of getting decent or honest service. The unfriendliness of the people who lived in the little village of Valdemosa was increased by their fear of contagion and their suspicion of strangers who never went to mass. George's optimism was taxed to the limit. It is hard to be a philosopher when you are under-fed, and hardships which would have been just part of the fun of roughing it, were it only a question of herself, were magnified by the sufferings of the sensitive but uncomplaining invalid. There are some people to whom the little elegancies and graces of life are indispensable for the upkeep of their morale. Chopin, with his hair uncurled, his white gloves and his perfectly fitting suit exchanged for a loose blouse and a warm shawl, and shorn of the ceremonies and dignities incumbent upon a public character, slumped terribly; he became irritable and exacting. The squeamish appetite of a sick man, which rejects a diet of pork in all its forms, rancid oil, and rain-soaked bread brought up the mountain on a donkey, would clip the wings of any angel. But George was indefatigable. She brandished her duster and broom, manufactured sick-dishes out of nothing, and aided the discontented French maid, who was not enjoying these unexpected inconveniences and menial duties, in washing dishes and preparing their scanty repasts. At the same time she taught Solange grammar, helped Maurice with his Thucydides, and sat up all night writing *Spiridion*, whose monastic setting and ghostly apparitions gained vividness from her environment. The children grew strong, rosy and noisy, in spite of their hardships; they climbed like cats over the roofs and walls of the convent, coaxed their mother to lead them on ghost-hunts at night in the little cemetery of the monks within an old Gothic cloister, and enticed her on long walks and stiff climbs on the mountainside, whenever there was a brief lull in the storm. Chopin was a bundle of nerves, and daily growing weaker and more fretful, but always polite and repressed, and profoundly grateful for the devotion and affectionate care George lavished on him. He worked on his Bach scores, and composed lovely, plaintive *Preludes* to solace himself when she was absent or busy, but she had to confess to herself that the wandering angel made a detestable

(*Musée Czartoryski, Varsovie*)

CHOPIN. DRAWING BY GEORGE SAND

invalid. Clearly he was not a " good sport," and the side of his nature that the sun did not shine on was petulant and childish. He was wretched when she left him alone to take a little exercise with her children, and when they trooped in, radiant and merry after some long expedition and hair-breadth adventure, his white face and faint voice and glacial manner was a wet-blanket on them all and George's reviving spirits were paralysed in her breast.

Even a Majorcan winter has an end. One day in February the rain ceased and the sun came out and it was spring. The almonds were pink, the fields yellow with jonquils, the half-drowned roses on the walls spread their petals to the genial warmth and the children came in with their arms full of wild-flowers for the invalid. But alas ! it was too late to save the situation. The first reasonable promise of a smooth sea must be seized to get the sick man back to Barcelona and civilisation as speedily as possible. The little party folded their tents, and bumped and jostled down the mountain again to the landing-place where the boat with its cargo of pigs was getting up steam. George looked back ruefully on the retreating mountain tops where their poem was to have been written in letters of gold. " I could have been so happy there in spite of everything, alone with my children ! I could have stayed there three years in that loveliness, and snapped my fingers at all the rest. Is there, then, anywhere in the universe, a Being who is my soul-mate ? "

The unwelcome visitors left two souvenirs behind for the inhospitable Majorcans to exhibit to future and more fortunate travellers. One was Chopin's piano, which was purchased by a rich bourgeois ; the other was a large black ink-stain on the map of Amerigo Vespucci, one of the treasures of the splendid library of the Counts of Montenegro, which George Sand, they like to say, thus defaced by overturning an ink-well upon it. She explained afterwards that it was due to the zeal of the guide, who, to keep the map flat for her better inspection, placed the ink-well on one of its corners. However it came about, the damaged relic of two candidates for the Hall of Fame was finally removed to Barcelona for safe keeping.

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There was no longer a question of "sublime days" or "occasional meetings." Chopin, sick and dependent, was simply another child that must be cared for. If any doubt ever troubled George Sand as to how her relations with this adopted son would affect her duties to her own children as they matured, she dismissed it as unworthy of her philosophy. Sufficient unto the day! Fate was attending to all these matters for her. After a sojourn of nearly three months in Marseilles, waiting for spring to thaw out the fields and streams of Berry, she transported her invalid to Nohant. "He is," she wrote Mme. Marliani, "an angel of patience and tenderness, a temperament too exquisite and delicate to live in this world." However, she was assured that he would in all probability, if properly cared for, continue to live. Dr. Cauvière, the physician in Marseilles (incidentally an admirer of Leroux), as well as Dr. Papet, who was summoned as soon as they reached home, scouted the idea of tuberculosis. All the patient needed was rest, good food and country air. George breathed a sigh of relief as she caught sight of the tall trees that brooded over Nohant. "I do not enjoy travelling any more; or rather, the conditions have changed, since I am no longer a *garçon*, and have to carry a whole family around with me."

At Nohant they settled down into a tranquil patriarchal sort of existence, which was to endure for eight years, with an annual shifting of the scene to Paris in the winter, when Chopin was well enough to resume his teaching. The invalid rapidly regained his normal condition, which was always frail and threatening total collapse. George related her impressions of the Balearic Islands in a book dedicated to François Rollinat, and the celebrated adventure passed into history.

All the Berry friends accepted "Chip-Chop," as George now called him fondly, as a matter of course, and Chip-Chop accepted them politely, did not appear to see those who offended his standards of correctness, shut his ears to conversation and voices that were distasteful to him, and accepted like a noble martyr the boisterous and tipsy admiration of Hippolyte Chatiron, who daily clumped from his farm a half-mile away to have dinner at Nohant, in his clumsy hob-nailed shoes and dirty clothes, and shouted and stamped around the billiard

table after he had filled himself with strong Berry wine. To be sure he became glacial when Mme. Sand boasted of her plebeian ancestry ; he would have preferred to hear her talk of her cousins, the Villeneuves, and of their daughter, the Princess Galizine, with whom she was once more on visiting terms. He suffered tortures when she frankly discussed her mother's foibles and errors as she would dissect a character in a novel, and alluded calmly and impartially to her own previous lovers as she would speak of an attack of bronchitis or of one of her stories that did not develop satisfactorily. He dreaded, too, the frequent hospitality offered to noble and dirty proletarians and shabby philosophers, slightly disreputable actors and aspiring young poets. But he was faithful to their pact of respecting each other's opinions and idiosyncrasies, and his attitude toward " my Hostess " as he called her (to his parents she was *on*—they), was always deferential, admiring and devoted. Being an unexpansive nature, and too sensitive to open his heart to even his most intimate friend, abstinence from discussion or criticism was not difficult for him. " It needed a microscope to see into his soul," said his Hostess, " where so little light shone ; he never spoke out except in his music."

Apart from his music, which George admired with a discrimination and intelligence that caused him to value her opinion on all he composed, almost the only ground on which this ill-assorted pair may be said to have met absolutely and unreservedly, was sickness. Was George confined to her room with a cold or a headache ? Chopin hovered about her anxiously, bringing her chocolate, adjusting her pillow, darkening her windows or laying a shawl over her feet. Was Chip-Chop ill ? He was coddled like a spoiled baby, the entire household deferred to his needs, fancied or real, and " my Hostess " watched tenderly at his bedside day and night. She was what old-fashioned people called a " born nurse," and was in her best form when she had an invalid at her mercy. Not that Chopin was insensible to the other and more obvious talents of his hostess. He had a high regard for her mentality, and greatly admired her books, reading all her manuscripts before they went to the publishers. In fact, he rarely read any thing else. But as he was not interested in social or

philosophical questions, he read them only for the story, quite as if he had been a humble subscriber to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. It is possible that he knew as little as he cared, about what she had called the " positive side " of her life. He only knew that her stories flowed from her pen as abundantly and serenely as if an angel dictated while she held the pen, all night long, while other people slept ; whereas his nocturnes were born in labour and anguish, while other people frolicked ; that she rarely corrected or re-read her manuscript, and never worried about it, while he paced the floor for days, feverishly searching for a single modulation or harmony. George was aghast at such protracted birth-throes. With her, everything came so easily ; she was brimming with ideas. " Why don't you put it into music ? " she asked, when he praised a poetic account of the *Vallée Noire* which he had overheard her giving to a visitor. And sitting down at the piano, he improvised a pastoral symphony, while she leaned over his shoulder, suggesting and approving. " Courage, velvet fingers ! " " Why don't you put *that* to music," she asked again, when he was laughing to see Coco chase his own tail. And in a few days, he played her a waltz in D sharp, which he called the " Waltz of the Little Dog." His creation was always spontaneous, miraculous ; it was the working out of the theme that cast a gloom over the entire family. " Your first inspiration is always the best," she told him. " Why try to improve upon it and spend six weeks on one page ? You wear yourself out, and after all you generally come back to your original form. Drop it all for awhile, and come for a picnic with Fleury and the Malgache and Polyte and the children. You and Solange can ride the donkey and the pony, and the rest of us will walk. You will come back a new man and your work will go smoothly and easily."

But Chopin was not enchanted by the prospect of a caravan expedition to Boussac to see the famous tapestries, and to eat a monstrous breakfast with the pianotype colony ; nor did his soul yearn for a night on the straw in a peasant's cottage on the banks of the Creuse. He disliked picnics on the grass with horses and dogs eating out of his plate. He would have preferred to remain at home with Coco, shut up in his room, shed-

ding hot tears over the nocturnes and mazourkas and the lovely sonata with the funeral march, that slowly and painfully attained that degree of perfection than which there was nothing less that would satisfy him. The melancholy beauty of George's *Vallée Noire* left him cold, and the noisy, Bohemian young people who came down to Nohant from Delacroix's studio, where Maurice was learning to paint, and who added zest to these expeditions in Mme. Sand's opinion, added not at all to his languid enjoyment of nature. They were not dandies, these friends of Maurice, any more than the coarse and slightly disreputable theatrical people that George cultivated through the good offices of a handsome and talented but very vulgar celebrity, the actor Bocage, who was another of her fancies. Still less æsthetic were the humble kinsmen of Sophie Delaborde, whose coarse talk and manners were entirely lost upon the generous and democratic châtelaine of Nohant. She looked beneath mere accidental externalities, into the honest souls of her friends. The annoyance of her snobbish "petit Chopin" was *not* lost on her but she overlooked that too. "He takes a fly for an elephant," she said to herself.

The kind of amusement that passed muster at Nohant—charades, blindman's buff, practical jokes, peasant balls on the village green to the strains of the terrible *cornemuse*—was another iron in the soul of this darling of the gods, accustomed to the incense of palaces and courts. The loud laughter and vehement conversation that inevitably accompanies such unconventional entertainment made his head ache. But his affection for his hostess and his own exquisite *savoir faire* never permitted him to betray the faintest irritation. When there was a "mystification" to be performed upon some innocent wretch, as when Maurice was impersonating a Spanish girl in a mantilla, obliging a new guest to speak in bad Castilian for the uproarious enjoyment of all the others, Chopin, like the perfect gentleman he was, played up to the occasion. He would pull his hair over his eye, or give his cravat a jerk and mimic a stolid Englishman or a sordid Jew, or caricature some of the stars of his own firmament, while the salon rung with applause as if it had been a Paris concert hall. All this for love of his hostess, he

graciously endured ; for his " Aurore of the black eyes " still held him in thrall.

Although the society at Nohant was not quite as brilliant as in the days of the " Fellowes," it was not entirely composed of Proletarians and Bohemians. There were many of Mme. Sand's friends who stood high in Chopin's regard. One of these was Eugène Delacroix, a dashing fiery artist, with yellow tiger-eyes under thin, straight eyebrows, oily black ringlets, and a long, square chin. George had known him well ever since she became one of his brother Romanticists. At the time that he painted her portrait, in the post-Musset period, evil-minded people had accused her of having, unsuccessfully, attempted to " vamp " him. Chopin, of course, had not heard this gossip, and was too chivalrous to notice it, if he had. A woman to him was sacred, and jokes at her expense were gross and vulgar. When his hostess invited the painter to Nohant to recuperate after a nervous breakdown, Chopin became very intimate with him. It was not possible for the musician, who experienced actual physical pain in contemplating a Rubens, and was afraid of Michel Angelo, to like Delacroix's style of painting, with its hot, brilliant colours and its gigantic, twisted figures, although George Sand admired it greatly. They found an unfailing topic, however, in the latest style of waistcoats and socks, in the problem of how to combine warmth in clothing with lightness, and were in perpetual *tête-à-tête.* George tried to extend their mutual sympathy to loftier themes and drew Delacroix out on one of his favourite hobbies, the æsthetic relation of colour and sound, in the hope of converting Chopin to programme music. But the musician, although astonished and amused by this novel theory, had no permanent interest in such fantastic ideas.

Like Chopin, Delacroix found life at Nohant monotonous and as dull as a convent, and he was obliged to return to painting in order to amuse himself in the long summer days when Mme. Sand was sleeping off the effect of her nightly orgies with her novels, and Chopin was busy at his piano. He improvised a canvas out of a breadth of cloth, intended for a corset, which the châtelaine resurrected from the bottom of a bureau, and painted an altar piece for the little church on the green, glorify-

ing the two peasant servants who served as models into a " St. Anne teaching the Virgin." Afterwards, in his studio in Paris he painted a second portrait of Mme. Sand, with Chopin, as he had so often seen them at Nohant—the musician seated at his piano, playing, his face half-turned toward his hostess, who sat just behind him with lowered head, her arms crossed and a lighted cigarette between her fingers.

Another of George's friends whom she shared with Chopin was the young Spanish opera singer, Pauline Garcia, a sister of the great actress Malibran. She was a slender, sinuous young creature, with prominent black eyes, heavy Spanish eyebrows, an exceedingly long upper lip, a full, coarse mouth, and sleek dark hair, parted in the middle. Not only was she beautiful, she was always good and charming, and when she sang, George forgot all her troubles. She called her " my big daughter," and to save her from the attentions of Alfred de Musset (who, she told her, was a dangerous man for a young artist to know) she married her to Leroux's disciple and partner in the *Revue Indépendante*, Louis Viardot. The Viardots visited Nohant almost every summer. Pauline read eighteenth century music at sight with Chopin, and rode horseback or took long walks with Mme. Sand, and Viardot talked philosophy and politics. This modest and lovable young artist felt greatly honoured when she was immortalised in the Bohemian heroine of *Consuelo*. She was thus able to live, through the imagination of her distinguished friend, as a sort of high-priestess of musical art, in the very Corte Minelli in Venice, in which George Sand had lived her brief romance with Dr. Pagello, and to be permanently associated with the musicians and composers of the eighteenth century, Haydn, Metastasio, Marcello—whom she and Chopin most admired. And as her husband was a disciple of the Gospel of Leroux, she may have been encouraged to see in herself an actual case of that progressive reincarnation which was the theme, or one of the many themes, of the learned and voluminous novel. As both Liszt and Meyerbeer considered composing an opera on the theme of *Consuelo*, she narrowly missed an opportunity of recreating the *rôle* for the pleasure of her contemporaries.

Many of Chopin's musical friends and pupils, and of his

compatriots who had fled to Paris after the Polish Revolution, were also invited to Nohant, but as they were more closely identified with the winters he and Mme. Sand passed in the city, it is better to follow the musician and the Piffoëls on their annual flights to Paris, where Chopin was able once more to enjoy the luxuries and elegances of Society.

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Paris, wrapped in its sad pall of dinginess and dirt, when viewed through the spectacles of approaching middle age, appeared to George Sand to be the tomb of genius, a den of wicked luxury and artificiality. Only to think of it made her heart ache. The mud of Berry, when the spring floods came and the roads and meadows were spongy with mire, was beautiful mud ; no cup of *café noir* in a Paris restaurant could stimulate her like a bowl of the good Mère Nanette's *fromentin*. Her body got fat and her mind lean in the city. But while Chopin's body grew strong and his genius burned bright in Nohant, his soul drooped and he pined for the excitement of drawing-rooms and *soirées intimes*, for the homage of handsomely dressed, titled women, for the sumptuous hospitality of magnates and princes. George deplored but pardoned this weakness. " He was brought up at the knees of princesses," she said, compassionately.

It was impossible for him to live in Paris without his Hostess ; he grew daily more dependent on her. So every autumn there was a tribal exodus, with the accompanying burden of installation in a Paris apartment. If George chanced to be detained later at Nohant by complications with her steward or repairs on the château—a greenhouse, a studio for Maurice, a new *parterre* or the redecoration of Chip-Chop's room—Chopin, torn from her arms by the necessity of resuming his lessons or his concerts, was entrusted to the tender care of her friend, Mme. Marliani, or his pupil, Mlle. Rozière, or of Maurice, if he preceded her. " Here is my little Chopin ; I confide him to you. Take care of him in spite of himself. He behaves badly when I am not there." She did not worry about his dinners, for she knew he would be invited out everywhere, but they were begged to see that he had his cup of hot chocolate or bouillon, which she never trusted to his valet, before he started

his lessons, and that he put on his thickest coat and overshoes. Above all he must not be allowed to get lonely and she must have frequent health bulletins. " He needs the affection of which outward attentions are the symbol. He is often impatient at them but he is touched nevertheless."

Chopin, on his part, was equally solicitous about his Hostess. Wrapped in a heavy overcoat and three sets of flannels, he worried lest she was taking cold in her big, draughty country-house. He was very lonely, but she must not think of starting on the long coach-trip to Paris if a snowstorm was threatening. Sitting solitary by his fireside, he looked out at the courtyard where the falling flakes were turning the trees and fountain into " snowballs and sugar swans, white hands of Solange and white teeth of Maurice," and pictured George in her dressing-gown, surrounded by her little family. When he wrote her about the black *levantine*, very best quality, which he had bought for her at nine francs a metre, and which the intelligent dress-maker had recommended as simple and stylish, or when, with the faintest shade of sarcasm, he described the new prophet, announced in Mme. Marliani's " heraclite " salon, who had seen God in the Bois de Meudon, and who promised, as the acme of bliss in eternity, the complete elimination of sex, —George knew all was well. When his notes were short and sad (and they were at best exceedingly formal) she suspected that he was ill, and plied her friends with entreaties to watch over him and keep her posted until she could fly to his side. But it was exceptional when they did not make the journey to Paris together.

In the Rue Pigalle at the foot of Montmartre, the amiable Fontana, assisted by the serviceable Gryzmala, had succeeded in finding apartments possessing almost all the qualifications minutely specified by Chopin as indispensable for him, and more particularly for Mme. Sand : sun, quiet, no smoke, not too many stairs, wooden floors, genteel elegance. At first the artist, who was still sensitive to the speech of people, was installed in a separate building quite near ; but as this proved awkward and inconvenient, he soon cast off the veil of delicacy, and moved into the apartment above Mme. Sand's. The Rue Pigalle of 1840 was a silent, solitary street of small houses with

gardens. The entrance to the little pavilion they occupied was at the back of a garden or court, adorned with a few plane-trees, elms and lilac bushes. A narrow straight staircase led to Mme. Sand's apartment. Chopin received his pupils in his own rooms, but always passed his evenings, if he was not invited out, in the salon of his hostess, where there was music, conversation and many visitors. After three winters in Rue Pigalle, they moved to a new and more modern apartment house in the Cour d'Orléans, off the Rue St. Lazaire, where, in company with Mme. Marliani, who had an apartment in the same house, they established for a time a sort of "phalanstary," taking their meals with her and spending their evenings in one or the other's salon, as the occasion demanded.

The furnishings of Mme. Sand's Paris home were more luxurious than those of her famous *nid d'amour* on Quai Malaquais. Its quiet but rich adornments reflected Chopin's reserved and elegant taste. A salon in *café-au-lait* and a reception room in green, with hangings and thick carpets of *marron*, a few paintings by Delacroix, her portrait by Calamatta, and an abundance of flowers in "superb Chinese vases," and—central and imposing feature of all—a "magnificent square rosewood piano," told the awestruck visitor that he was entering the sanctuary of the Muses. Balzac, to whose photographic descriptions of interior decorations some of these details are due, particularly noted a large Turkish couch in her bedroom, covered with an oriental carpet. There was no place here for the sabots and kerchiefs of the democratic Michel. Chopin, descending from his refined suite in which delicate pearl gray was the predominating tint, must have a shrine worthy of the jewels it contained.

George Sand was under fire now, both from her own circle and from Chopin's. Everyone was curious to see how the convert to communism bore herself in her interesting relation to this elegant, fastidious musician, with his carefully curled locks, his aristocratic aquiline nose, his long, slender, sensitive hands and quiet, reserved manners. Strangers disposed to be critical found her younger but less beautiful than they expected; shorter and stouter, her mouth coarse, her famous eyes a little too close together and lacking in brilliancy; dull, even cold.

THE SALON OF GEOR

Calamatta as a serpent
François Arago as a triton
Liszt upon his knees
Delacroix as a shepherd
George Sand as a shepherdess
Chopin as a bird on her knee
Mallefille, with a beard

(*Musée Carnavalet*)

PAINTED BY CHARPENTIER

Maurice as a zephyr
Bocage as a faun
Michel with a pistol
Emanuel Arago as Mercury in spectacles
Gryzmala lying under a tree
Abbé Enricos with a guitar
Charles Didier and Bonnechose as rustics, looking on
Solange as a lion, guarding the sheep

But her magnificently poised head, her thick dark hair, divided in two simple bands that framed her high smooth brow, gave her a great distinction. Those who were prepared to find a sensational " man-woman " were disappointed. She did not wear trousers. She dressed simply, generally in black, and her manner was quiet and without coquetry. Her remarkably small and delicately modelled hands that toyed gracefully with her cigarette, betrayed the " lady-born " that no boast of democratic lineage could disavow.

It was remarked that she was " Hostess " only in Chopin's respectful attribution of the *rôle*. She made no effort to entertain either her guests or his. Silent to the point of rudeness, she walked about indifferently among the visitors with her mysterious Mona Lisa smile and lowered eyes, scarcely noticing them, and smoking incessantly, restlessly tossing her half-burned cigarette into the glass of water that stood in every room for that purpose. Only when she saw that the little Chopin was getting tired, or excited, did she come out of her abstraction, slipping up behind him quietly, and laying her pretty little hand on his soft fair hair, to warn him not to over-exert himself. That constant *rôle* of *garde-malade!* She was always quiet and self-effacing. When she made a public appearance on a night when Chopin was going to play, and entered the crowded Salle Pleyel which was brilliant with glittering jewels, gauzes and laces, and the white shoulders of beautiful women of the world, there was a mild sensation. She walked simply and modestly, with bent head, to her seat, followed by her pretty blond daughter, as if quite unconscious of the flutter of excitement and gossip that passed through the audience.

Many of George Sand's old friends of the Quai Malaquais circle found her out in her new and æsthetic salon. Balzac, always in hyperboles and tremendously talkative, came to study the *Comédie Humaine* and to babble of his own magnificent projects. Marie Dorval, the beautiful and unfortunate actress whom Mme. Sand had described as Pulchrérie, the courtesan, in *Lélia*, and who counted among her many conquests the peerless Alfred de Vigny and the less exemplary Jules Sandeau ; the Viardots, Arago, Delacroix, were there of course, and Pierre Leroux, shabby, dirty and with uncombed mane, but

always gentle and optimistic. Heinrich Heine furnished the *esprit*. He had watched George's progress from the start. " She is always seeking God and He is nowhere so much at home as in music," he remarked when he found her with Chopin. Although he declared that she was the least *spirituelle* Frenchwoman he had ever met, he thought that for a woman-writer (a phenomenon he abhorred) she was both handsome and harmless, which was what every woman ought to be. He regretted that she was surrounded by so many " malicious cats " who caressed her with one paw while they scratched her with the other, but like the moon, she seemed not to notice them and looked down gently on the barking dogs.

Even on the spiteful Heine George looked kindly when he snarled. She got tired of his mania for puns, and she felt his viper's tongue more than once, but he had a good heart, she said, and he could be tender, affectionate and devoted in love. The cats hissed that she had good reason to know Heine's virtue as a lover, and the viper's tongue struck at Joseph Dessauer, a Viennese composer to whom Chopin dedicated two polonaises. Heine spread the report that Dessauer, whom he described as a " crawling, nameless insect," had boasted of an *affaire de cœur* with Chopin's hostess, but that, as he was only a vainglorious boy who could never have found favour with Lélia, the boast was a lie. A suit for libel was Dessauer's retaliation, with a sympathetic letter for publication from the lady involved, which completely cleared the young Austrian. George was kept busy disentangling her protégés from alleged complications with her heart or her pen or her purse ! She soothed his ruffled plumage by putting him in her novel, *Maître Favilla*, as an elderly musician who was a little mad but a devout worshipper of the ideal. And as for Heine, she forgave him. He was ill, and Genius has its sick-dreams.

Chopin's circle was composed of musicians, Polish patriots and rich dilettante patrons of the arts, to whom he dedicated his music, like the Rothschilds, Baron Stockhausen, Leo (the secretary of the Austrian Embassy), Prince Czartoryski, Pleyel, who published his music, and the Countess Delphine Potocka, who was his star pupil. The big Gryzmala (G-r-r-r-, as George called him) was always there, rolling his great eyes

at any pretty girl who happened to be present. George's favourite was Adam Mickiewicz (" Mick " for short), a Polish poet and leader, as naïve as a child and as visionary as Leroux. He wrote long, mystical poems, in a style as fantastic as the Book of Fell, and lectured on Slav literature to admiring audiences of young people at the Collège de France. While not entirely accepting his belief in the redemption of Poland by a Messiah, and in his own supernatural mission in connection with this revelation, George found herself thoroughly at home in his mysticism and was inclined to believe in his visions and ecstasies. She surrounded him with an aureole, as she had already beatified Liszt and Lamennais. She especially coveted those powers of abstraction from material surroundings which enabled him to sit quietly in a corner, still listening to the sweet strains of Chopin's piano, while Chopin himself and the entire household were occupied in extinguishing a fire in an adjoining room, assisted by the fire-department of Paris. Mickiewicz was grateful for her admiration and for her zealous efforts to interest her theatrical friends in his mystical drama, *La Comédie Infernale*, but he was always a little nervous for fear she would put him in one of her books. He thought, however, that his young friend Chopin could never make her happy. He confided to Sainte-Beuve's cousin, the Swiss poetess Mme. Juste Olivier, who was visiting the lions of Paris and had been taken to the salon of two of the greatest, that in his opinion Chopin was Mme. Sand's evil genius, her cross, a moral vampire, who would end by killing her. " She seems to me to be more of a woman than a lady," said the poetess, " and as for him, he is certainly charming, but has he a heart ? " " His position is already a sinecure," said Heine ; and Mlle. Rozière, a meddlesome young lady who was giving music lessons to Solange, wrote to her lover (a brother of Chopin's former sweetheart, Marie Wodzkinska), " Love is no longer here, but tenderness and devotion, mixed with sadness, regrets and ennui."

While Society speculated and prophesied and whispered behind its fan, George was struggling to keep open the gate in the dividing wall—that affection and confidence which will always maintain hearts at the same level, however distinct the reservoirs of their sympathies.

But alas! in spite of her new religion, in whose calm light she had walked for these eight years, a grain of sand had fallen into the tranquil pool, and the pebbles had followed. Her life, so busy and radiant on the surface, had become an inward martyrdom which unfortunately involved those to whom she had responsibilities. The amours that make us suffer are perhaps not those that God has destined for us after all! The " sacrifice to love " had become an outworn creed.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REVOLT OF THE CHILDREN

" Que produira cette force d'âme qui m'a toujours fait repousser le joug de l'opinion et les lois humaines? . . . Si du moins je pourrais élever mes enfants dans ces idées, me flatter de l'espoir que ces êtres, formés de ma sang, ne seront pas des animaux marchants à tous les jougs, ni des mannequins obéissants à tous les fils des préjugés et des conventions, mais bien des créatures intelligentes, généreuses, indomptables dans leurs affections, jusqu'au martyre ! "

Lettres d'un Voyageur.[1]

" Mme. Sand has treated my friend Chopin outrageously in a divinely written novel," wrote Heine in 1846, when everyone was discussing George's new book, *Lucrezia Floriani.*

" These ignoble details of the kitchen, treasons of the bed, estrange all lovers, and women should protest against them," cried the highly specialised Mme. Hortense d'Allart.

Yet these were the days when authors felt quite free to take their inspiration wherever they found it. Mme. d'Agoult had played traitor to the inconstant Liszt in her new novel, *Nélida*, but people thought that the fury of her assault was excused by the evident depth of her sufferings, whereas the revelations of Mme. Sand offended propriety by their coldly analytical tone. Moreover the prototype of Prince Karol, the hero of Mme. Sand's novel, was still an esteemed and apparently acceptable member of her family circle. It was indecent to hang your wash in the door-yard when the family was at home and receiving guests.

Mme. Sand protested against this public outrage of the privileges and standards of art. The artist has a right to profit

[1] " What will be the result of this strength of soul which has always made me thrust off the yoke of public opinion and human laws? . . . If at least I could succeed in bringing up my children in these ideas, flatter myself with the hope that these beings, formed out of my substance, will not be animals, marching under the yoke, nor puppets obedient to every wire of prejudice and convention, but intelligent creatures, generous, indomitable in their affections, even to martyrdom."—*Letters of a Traveller.*

by personal experience and must respect the truth, but it is puerile curiosity which pries into the origin of every portrait and episode, instead of attending strictly to the lesson or picture presented. Every novelist knows that there is a complete and inexplicable contradiction between the conduct of people under romantic circumstances and their character and habits in the prose of everyday existence. Could anyone who knew the cold, reserved, polite Chopin, for example, for a moment conceive him in the attitude of the excitable Prince Karol, when, exhausted by his ardent protestations, he " rolled at the feet of his mistress, wringing his hands so violently that he made them bleed ? " Even Chopin, who had read the manuscript of *Lucrezia Floriani*, apparently failed to recognise himself in it, which not only proved that the public was following a false scent, but demonstrated the absurdity of seeking in life for the originals of the characters in a novel. No true artist would do it !

Ibsen has shown us in the " Wild Duck " that when kind friends are set upon destroying the peace of mind of a contented and unsuspecting man they generally succeed. The gentle Chopin's eyes were finally opened and he confided to his friend Fontana that although not given to profanity, he would welcome the privilege of damning *Lucrezia Floriani*.

But how could he, unassisted, have recognised his hostess in the dazzlingly beautiful and wealthy actress, Lucrezia, who had retired from fame and passion to her princely villa on Lago d'Iséo, in order to devote herself to the education of her four lovely children, each a legacy from a different lover, who slept beside her chaste couch in their four little cribs ? Or how, modest and unassuming man that he was, could he have pretended to the qualities of the charming young Prince Karol, whose " exceptionally delicate physiognomy appeared to the beholder to be both ageless and sexless " ; one of these ideal figures that one finds carved on mediæval temples, a beautiful angel, pure and svelte of form—a young god of Olympus, at once tender and severe, chaste and passionate ? " This story was not our romance," George declared. Certainly not ! Lucrezia died suddenly, a victim of the eternal suspicions and pinpricks of the devoted, but unfortunately jealous and intolerant Prince

Karol. When she no longer loved her Prince, there was nothing for this brave, simple, strong woman to do but die, leaving all her little cherubs to the supervision of their respective fathers. This certainly was not the story of Chopin and George Sand, for anyone could see that it was Chopin who was dying. Nevertheless, the public continued to exercise its right to be eclectic, and to keep in sight the numerous resemblances and insignificant details that seemed to explain the collapse, so long prophesied, of this great and noble union.

Aside from the accidental coincidences that casual acquaintances easily detected—the clash of temperament and principles, of the aristocrat with the plebeian, of the repressed and exclusive with the expansive and exuberant, there were more intimate causes of dissent between Prince Karol and his Lucrezia, that were only recognised in the inner shrine. Lucrezia was a devoted mother ; in fact, her maternal instinct was so imperious that she even wanted to mother all her lovers, including Prince Karol. Unfortunately, she had theories about the free development of the individuality of the child which, while excellent in themselves, sometimes impinged upon the free individualities of other people ; particularly when multiplied by four. The picture is vivid and life-like.

" The four children were generally quiet, but at lunch, when excited by the guests who amused themselves by caressing and teasing them, they made a great din, they emptied their glasses on the tablecloth, and sang loudly, repeating over and over the same refrain. One of them broke his plate, whereat his dog began to howl, drowning all conversation. The Floriani was not disturbed at this ; she laughed in spite of herself at the reparties of her little ones, who were beside themselves with happiness, as nervous and excitable children so easily become." If, however, in deference to the glacial glances of Prince Karol, who, though not a musician, had delicately attuned ears, Lucrezia attempted to administer a reproof, the results were distressing. Equally painful were the audible manifestations of grief and suffering when one of the four was hurt. Moreover the sight of a cut finger or a bleeding head was liable to cause the fragile Prince to faint. He frequently remonstrated with their mother on the too great liberty to maim their little

members permitted by her broad conceptions of personal rights, but the Floriani thought it unnecessary to establish rules that their reason could not yet grasp.

The Floriani's faith in the sanctity of youth was only surpassed by her marvellous ability as a nurse, and her almost phenomenal instinct in diagnosing and prescribing for sickness. When nursing Prince Karol, who was of exceedingly delicate physique, through a severe run of fever, she brought the children to his bedside, in order that their pure young breath might sweeten the air of the sickroom, and that when he opened his eyes, he would behold their cherub faces smiling at him.

Although Prince Karol never complained directly, and sacrificed his comfort and his old-fashioned ideas about the training of youth to his exquisite *savoir-vivre* and his devotion to the deluded mother, it is evident that as those children grew up and began to express their individualities still more freely, there was trouble ahead both for him and for Lucrezia Floriani. Fortunately the reader of this interesting novel is not pained by the tragedy of this final cause of dissension and misunderstanding between two such devoted lovers; the premature death of the Floriani relieved the impending situation. But in real life complications are not so easily smoothed out. During the eight years that Chopin had occupied the position of petted elder son, or revered step-father, or indulged invalid, or all three, in the household of the Piffoëls, the two children of his hostess, who had grown up under conditions quite as exceptional and individualistic as the four cherubs of the Floriani, had arrived at maturity and were a power to be reckoned with.

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From the time that he was a very small slender boy and sat beside his mother, cutting out paper soldiers, with a tearful eye on the clock which would strike the awful hour of return to the Lycée, Maurice Sand had adored her and wept when he was separated from her. This worship was reciprocated. The resemblance between them was not merely physical. Both had Bohemian and democratic tastes and were indifferent to the superfluous elegancies and luxuries of life. They both enjoyed picnics and camping, hunting flowers and bugs in the fields.

Both were quiet and introspective. Maurice had inherited his mother's artistic nature without its sensuousness and, unfortunately, without her perseverance and application. There was a little of his dilettante great-grandfather Dupin de Franceuil in him, minus the gallantries and fastidiousness of that elegant gentleman. He early decided that he wanted to be a painter, and to the displeasure of Chopin his mother took him out of school. The desultory education he was receiving from the varied assortment of tutors picked up among her literary and political protégés, was at an end and he entered the studio of Eugène Delacroix. For a while he was entirely happy in the study of art, neglecting his toilet and devoting his allowance to the purchase of casts and engravings, and Delacroix delighted his mother with the assurance that her boy could be a great painter if he wanted to. But Maurice had no desire to be a great anything. The bounds of his ambition were soon attained and a course of anatomy cooled his ardour for painting. George was obliged to prod him gently and sermonise him affectionately in order to counteract that inclination to dabble a little in everything which was partly traceable to the roving, inconsequent existence he had led, dragging about the country in the train of his mother and obliged, after her divorce, to spend a certain portion of his time in the company of his father at Guillery. At eighteen he was intellectually as unformed as a boy of ten, but he had developed a variety of tastes, and a great power of enjoyment derived from simple things.

As a little boy, Maurice had been accustomed to cherish and respect their gifted but fragile guest, to smooth his pillow and administer chocolate when necessary. But his jealous love of his mother resented her slavery to this moody and tyrannical invalid and with fatal consequences he began to take sides in the disagreements that arose between them. It is always better when people are free to settle these little difficulties without the intervention of a third party. Arrived at manhood, Maurice began to ask himself who was master at Nohant, himself or Chopin, and what right the musician had to pose as his mother's lover, and exclusive proprietor of her thoughts and actions. Seeing clearly, said Mme. Sand in her justification of her son, the perfect chastity of our relations, he thought Chopin made

us all ridiculous by assuming that he was anything more than a dear and valued guest. On the eve of Maurice's twenty-third birthday, the storm that had long been gathering finally burst on the shocked and astonished Chopin. Maurice thought it was time for one of them to abdicate, and threatened to leave Nohant himself. Of course, his mother was loyal to the call of her own flesh and blood. Chopin bowed his head and murmured " You no longer love me." It was our first and only quarrel, said Mme. Sand, but it was a very serious one. She went alone into the garden after this dreadful occurrence, and hid herself in the shrubbery, where she had often seen her mother weep after a disgreeable encounter with Mme. Dupin. She sat disconsolate upon the very bench where the impassioned young Sandeau had once poured out his love for her and besought her to elope with him to Paris in those far-away golden days of the romantic dawn. It was to the same shrubbery and bench, by every indication, that Lucrezia Floriani went to weep after her first quarrel with Prince Karol. Both heroines emerged from a long and passionate struggle, with their hearts quite calm and seeing clearly the duty that lay before them. George had decided Chopin would profit by a long period of absence from the Piffoëls in order to recover his serenity and sense of values ; until this could be arranged, Maurice was advised to hasten his usual visit to his father.

But there was another problem that Mme. Sand was obliged to solve at this same time. This related to Solange, and required a different technique. She had spoiled Maurice because she adored him ; she spoiled Solange because she had to.

This fair plump young lady with the blond curls, who generally went by the name of " the Princess " in the family, owing to her imperious nature and luxurious inclinations, had a bad start in life. From birth she had been destined to be a thorn in her mother's flesh, since, as it will be recalled, the news of her expected arrival had precipitated the cooling of Aurélien de Sèze's affection for Aurore Dudevant. From her cradle she had been naughty, mischievous and disobedient, just as Maurice had always been good and quiet and affectionate. She appeared to have inherited all the family weaknesses ; the frivolity and vanity of Sophie Delaborde, the stinginess and

prosaicness of her father, her mother's imagination without her genius and warmth. When she was little she was naughty, as the Duchess' baby sneezed, " because she knew it teased." When she grew older she made malice a fine art, distilled lies, George said, " like an alembic," and liked to torment her mother by professing to believe that Casimir was not her own father. She was always unhappy and jealous, and without friends, but she had a certain kind of bold, blond beauty, and being quick to take any hint that appealed to her vanity, was careful to perpetuate the two black lines which Delacroix, in joke, had painted above her eyes where her eyebrows should have been. She was large for her age and her wit was as precocious as her physique, a bitter, sarcastic wit, which her mother, having not a particle of *esprit*, had no weapon to parry. She greatly admired the novels of George Sand, which most young French girls were not permitted to read, and was anxious to write herself. She had a gift for epigrams, such as " Happiness is a sacred right of youth ; Duty is a big word without sense ; Love is only an expression of desire ; Friendship is only a habit " ; and although early initiated into the gospel of Leroux, she exhibited a premature scepticism and disquieting cynicism in matters of faith and virtue. Mme. Sand was shocked. She admitted that she did not understand girls, having always been a *garçon* herself, but she was sure that she had given her daughter moral standards that should have made her either a saint or a heroine ; yet not only did Solange have no religion in her soul, but even her passions were cold blooded. But she is a girl of the period, she concluded, and the period is accursed.

If Maurice's education had been irregular, that of Solange was still more extraordinary. She had accompanied her mother to Paris after the establishment of the Sandeau ménage, being then about two years old. She had therefore served her novitiate in the Bohemian surroundings of the Quai Malaquais, and as she had no nursery, she played with her dolls and her kitten in the midst of her mother's unconventional friends and lovers. They teased her and petted her, nursed her and dosed her, and took her out for an airing. Some humorous verses of de Musset's depict with realism the environment in which this little bud unfolded.

"George is in her dressing-gown
Between two pots of flowers,
Smoking her cigarettes,
Her eyes bathed in tears.

"Buloz, seated on the floor
Makes her pleasant offers;
Solange, behind her back,
Scribbles on her novels.

"Planted like a barricade,
Boucoiran all spotty,
Contemplates with dismal eye
Alfred in negligée.

"In most solemn silence
Pouring out his tea,
Paul receives the eloquence
Of the muddy Ménard.

"Planche, still drunk from yesterday,
Is seated in the corner,
With the utmost carefulness
Cleaning out his ears."

Emmanuel Arago delighted to tell of an afternoon's excursion to the Luxembourg with the *enfant terrible*. Preferring always to ride, Solange objected to his dismissing the cab at the entrance. In vain did he explain that it was not customary to drive in the gardens; when his back was turned Solange threw away her shoes and demonstrated her inability to walk. This was very clever, but these traits persisted and were less diverting in a girl of eighteen.

At seven, after all the excitement accompanying her mother's divorce suit, Solange was the heroine of a sensational abduction by her father, which greatly increased her self-importance. George was in Fontainebleau with Maurice. On learning that her daughter had been torn screaming from the arms of Rollinat's sister, in whose charge she had been left at Nohant, she promptly collected her ammunition and marched upon Guillery, armed with warrants, letters—and Mallefille! Baron Haussmann, who was then Sub-Prefect of the Garonne, heard the clatter of a *calèche-de-poste* before his door in the early morning as he was making his toilet, and immediately afterwards a letter was presented from the Minister of the Interior

introducing a desolate mother. Mme. Sand assured him there was no time to lose. The Sub-Prefect ran with the letter to the Garde-des-Sceaux and the Garde-des-Sceaux jumped out of bed and dressed in a hurry. Although it was not an enviable errand, this of descending in the name of the law on one of the great proprietors of the country (Casimir, through the recent death of his step-mother had now come into the title of Baron, with the lands of Guillery), neither of these gallant gentlemen could refuse to accompany a lady in distress. Fresh horses were provided and the expedition set off in state, accompanied by a brigade of the gendarmerie. They arrived at Guillery just in time to prevent Casimir, who had got wind of the approach of an armed force, from running out at the back door with the pawn. Overawed by the formidable cavalcade at his gates he decided that the game was lost, and came down the avenue to meet his pursuers, leading his little daughter by the hand. " Madame," he said, with dignity, " I yield to violence ! " " You stole her from me," retorted Mme. Sand, " My conduct was ruled by yours ! " " Who is that ? " asked Solange, pointing to the gallant young Sub-Prefect ; and immediately she began to " tutoyer " him. She thoroughly relished her star-part, with the whole little town of Nérac on tiptoe, as they rode back in state.

" Don't cry," she wrote Maurice, " I am found again ! . . . To get me back to Mama it took three darling gendarmes, an old *petit-pas*, Mallefille, the sub-prefect, the bailiff, and a very, very old officer of the police. You told Mallefille to bring us both back ; he has kept his word. My father was in a rage. I have been to the Pyrenees. I galloped on a horse. I am coming in a big post-chaise with three horses to kiss you. At Lourdes the houses and bridges are built of marble."

George had turned the episode to good account. Not only did she accept the proffered hospitality of the young bachelor sub-prefect, who was delighted to show the celebrated Lélia how coquettishly he was living in his little apartment behind the walls of an old monastery, and prided himself on being able to keep up his end of the conversation on all the topics people discussed at Paris ; but after three days as his guest at Nérac, meeting many of her old friends of the Guillery days at the chic

little dinners offered by her host in her honour, her tender memories of the Pyrenees were so vividly revived that she decided to take Solange—and Mallefille—for a peep at the region sacred to the memory of Aurélien de Sèze. Solange returned to Nohant with the " air of a Princess who had just been transferred as a hostage on the borderland of two states."

Quite naturally, Chopin sympathised with the aristocratic tastes of Mme. Sand's little daughter, and whenever it was a question of divided allegiance, he ranged himself on the side of the " Princess." In this way the balance of power was frequently endangered, and his hostess put him gently in his place if he offered any suggestions about the management of either of her children. But there was a tacit alliance between this bold young lady with the gazelle eyes, and her mother's honoured guest, and being an artful and sagacious young person, by the time she was eighteen years old she had him where she could do about as she liked with him. She shared his abhorrence of the humble proletariate, and his respect for the titled and moneyed aristocracy, and she took advantage of her music lessons with him and of their rides together with the pony and donkey, while the more athletic companions went on foot, to increase his discontent and to gently instil her suspicions of the other members of the family into his surprised and shocked ears. Chopin was very credulous ; he was also very innocent, and did not perceive that the advances of Mlle. Solange were not always strictly platonic. For it had occurred to her ingenious mind that it would be amusing to tease her mother by stealing her lover.

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As her children grew up and brought their young friends to the house, Mme. Sand gave free expression to her worship of youth, with its exuberance and lightheartedness. She never could have too many young people about her. The more noise they made the better, for then she was sure they were enjoying themselves. Her own girlhood had been sombre and abnormal. She was determined that her children and all their friends should find the joyous portals of life wide open before them. She organised picnics and excursions, took them swimming in the Indre, ransacked her attic for costumes for

tableaux and impromptu balls, improvised pantomimes, planned " mystifications " and practical jokes, promoted village fêtes, presided at peasant weddings and christenings, and established an open-air riding-school, where she acted as riding-master, and cracked her long whip as she stood in the centre of the ring, while the young people practised fancy riding. She threw herself into all these diversions with an animation that far exceeded that of the younger participants. " What an astounding nature ! " Prince Karol exclaimed when he saw Lucrezia Floriani collecting pebbles, chasing butterflies, racing with her dog and romping with her children ; " everything pleases and amuses and excites her." It will also be recalled that even the less delicately organised Casimir Dudevant had criticised the *abandon* of his young wife's deportment when playing games with the children of M. Duplessis at Melun.

But George Sand needed something to distract her mind from her worries about Chopin and Solange, and the summer of 1846 was outwardly the gayest season that Nohant had enjoyed. Among the numerous young guests were Eugène Lambert, a lovable young artist who specialised as a painter of cats, and who, coming for a month's visit, remained for years ; Victor Borie, one of Leroux's disciples, and, still more unwelcome to Chopin, several representatives of the least presentable branch of Mme. Sand's family. Among the latter was Augustine Brault, " Titine " as she was called affectionately. On the character of this young lady there was a sad difference of opinion in the household. According to Mme. Sand and Maurice, Titine was as good as she was beautiful, and had a heart that would " take her straight to Paradise." In the estimation of Chopin, and of Solange, she was everything that was objectionable. Her origin was certainly unsavoury ; her mother, a cousin of Sophie Delaborde, whose very name was taboo by order of Mme. Dupin, had been a " kept woman." George met her first at the bedside of the dying Sophie the summer before Chopin entered the family. She had risen a degree in society by that time ; she had married a labourer and was " Mme. Brault." George generously welcomed her newly discovered relative, but soon discovered that Mme. Brault's moral standards had not been elevated to the same degree as her

social position. It appeared that she counted on adding to the family income through merchandising the charms of her very pretty daughter. As a result of this discovery Augustine was removed from her unwholesome environment and invited to visit her cousins in Paris. She created such a favourable impression upon two of them that Mme. Sand concluded to adopt her, informally, and offered to pay the mercenary Brault couple an annual reimbursement for the loss of so valuable a source of future income. There was even some thought of a match between Maurice and the good and beautiful Titine, but George decided that the evident affection between them was purely fraternal and devoted herself to giving Titine social and educational advantages that would separate her for ever from the evil surroundings in which she had been brought up.

If Titine was *persona non grata* to the fastidious Chopin, it may be imagined how the sublime Solange resented her introduction into the family. She put all her concealed batteries into action to torment and discredit this unwelcome cousin.

Chopin was something of a damper on the social activities at Nohant in 1846. He was not well, and more exacting than ever. He sometimes went a whole day without speaking, and everyone wondered uncomfortably who was the offender. He absented himself from many of the merry-makings, and plaintively remarked that he thought the young people were happier without him. He complained in his home letters that owing to the prejudices of the young people, he should be obliged to dismiss his Polish valet, and that he could not have visits from his Polish friends because Maurice and " the cousin " ridiculed them behind their backs ; also that a projected trip to Italy to escape the rigours of the winter season had been abandoned because the young people did not care to go. Mme. Sand tried to laugh away his ill-humour and thaw out his frigidity, but, had it not been that she had discarded the vocabulary of romanticism when she accepted the gospel of Leroux, she would have confessed that she " suffered " once more. When Chopin appeared with his " night-cap face " every one knew that it was time to tread cautiously. Titine kept out of his way, and his valet became temporarily invisible. The cook " puffed like a sperm whale," the housemaid raised her eyebrows,

Arago exclaimed " Dear ! dear ! " under his breath, and the little dog, Bisquet, rolled his tail up tight and ran out of the room. Only " Sol " stood her ground, and returned his clawing with bites. The *bête-noire* of his displeasure was sometimes a certain Captain d'Arpentigny, who was popular with the hostess because he had written a book on Palmistry, or, on another occasion, Chopin's adoring pupil, Mlle. Rozière, a meddlesome " old maid " with thin lips and " catty " hands, who, to his displeasure had attached herself like a leech to Mme. Sand and was taking advantage of that lady's good nature to worm her way into her confidence. Mlle. Rozière went about dissolved in tears and Mme. Sand tried to comfort her, and in so doing injudiciously lifted the veil upon some of the intimate family secrets, as Chopin had feared she would do. She tried to keep unwelcome guests at a distance, humoured Chip-Chop as if he were a sick child and ignored the quarrels and back-biting, in parlour and kitchen, all set in motion by her domestic demon, Solange.

In the midst of it all, the *demon* fell ill. She was languid, nervous, lost her appetite, could not sleep. Dr. Papet prescribed, and it was decided to delay the usual autumn migration to Paris. Chopin departed alone, leaving his hostess intent on a new enterprise. She had made up her mind that there was but one solution to the situation ; Solange must be married. In arranging for this event she did not care to be encumbered with the suggestions of Chip-Chop. The opportunity had arrived for that prolonged and restorative separation upon which she had decided after Maurice's ultimatum, as the only means of re-adjusting the musician's relation to her family and to herself.

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Lest Mme. Sand appear to have deserted her principles of *Indiana* in thus seeking to " arrange " a marriage for her daughter in cold blood, like any unemancipated bourgeois mother, it must be conceded that even the most rabid professor of the doctrine of the rehabilitation of women should be permitted modifications of conduct under extenuating circumstances. Besides, time and several bitter experiences had shed new light on the problems of marriage and the sex, and the

George Sand who had said, " Don't profane love by marriage; you will only extinguish it in pure hearts," was not the same George Sand who had written the Abbé Rochet, after her divorce, that in her opinion conjugal fidelity was indispensable for the maintenance of love and the family, though possible only when the two sexes are bound and judged by the same moral standards. A later and still more mature George Sand believed that marriage should be a religious permission, an encouragement and exhortation to the perpetuity of the engagement, and should be consecrated by exhortation, prayers, and a publicity that renders it respectable. It is to be presumed that this last great step was not taken by the light of pure reason alone but under the wise and unerring guidance of the maternal instinct, which is, after all, the final sanction in this all-important matter.

So, quite in the admirable manner of her grandmother Dupin, Mme. Sand began to cast about for a desirable *parti* for her problematic daughter. Louis Blanc, a young socialist of brilliant promise, who was already a worshipper at the shrine of Sand—" one-third for her sex and two-thirds for her talent," was the first candidate. He proved inacceptable to Solange, and Leroux suggested a young poet, Victor de Laprade. He came to Nohant before Chopin left and won all hearts except the important one; Solange amused herself by pinching and scratching this amiable young man, stealing his eyeglasses, tearing his cravat, and teasing him at every opportunity. There was no chance to discover whether this was merely a form of coquetry which would pass in good time, for the family of the young gentleman, being strong Catholics, were horrified at the idea of an alliance with the heretical and iconoclastic race of Sand, and summoned their son and heir to return home without delay. Finally a country squire was produced, an honest and good-looking young Berrichon with quartered arms on his *blason*, by the name of Fernand de Préaulx. To Mme. Sand's joy Solange appeared to look kindly on this well-accredited suitor, and recovered at once. It seemed as if one of the family problems had been solved.

Early in February, Chopin, who had been patiently awaiting the arrival of his hostess in Paris for several months, was

cheered by the announcement that the marriage was arranged, and that the family would soon come to Paris for the carnival and the purchase of the trousseau.

Before Mme. Sand entered upon this matronly and conventional *rôle*, she had received an ill-written, ill-spelled letter from a young sculptor, named Clésinger, who was exhibiting at the spring Salon, asking permission to dedicate his work to her.

" Persuaded that gratitude is the first of virtues, I take the liberty of writing you, trying to thank you, thank you. Doubtless the author of *Consuelo*, that soul and that heart so altogether artistic, will visit the exhibition of sculpture. Then, Madame, give a glance to my statue of *Melancholy* crowned with myrtle, holding a manuscript in her left hand, and sustaining her weary head on her hand."

George Sand received many such letters and tributes from unknown friends. She was always ready to encourage youthful or struggling talent, and when she came to Paris she sought out the young sculptor. He was a boastful, quarrelsome, blustering young devil and Chopin took a violent dislike to him, but George was gracious, and granted his prayer to be permitted to make her bust and that of Solange, with consequences that the most astute prophet could scarcely have foreseen. Solange, who was represented as a " sort of *bacchante*, with flying hair and dilated nostrils," decided suddenly to take her matrimonial affairs into her own hands. She spurned the young Berrichon squire with the quartered arms, refused to sign the marriage contract, and announced her preference for the sculptor. George, in consternation, packed her trunks and hastened back to Nohant with the emancipated Solange, leaving Chopin astonished, exasperated and mystified, but not at all in the secret. Her children were her own affair !

Arrived at Nohant with Clésinger in hot pursuit, Mme. Sand was not permitted time to decently inter the defunct de Préaulx match or to consume the funeral baked meats with appropriate excuses and explanations to the neighbours, before she discovered that her enterprising daughter was negociating an elopement with the young sculptor by methods worthy of her own most romantic period. She made all haste to temper the wind of gossip. " Our crazy sculptor is here," she wrote

Sol's former teacher, M. Bascans; "the great Princess is humanised." To Mme. Marliani she wrote that Clésinger was making much money and would be able to give Sol the brilliant existence she wanted and although at first he appeared rather brusque, he was full of the divine fire and his brusqueness was due to his sincerity. To her cousins, the noble Villeneuves, she announced, "Clésinger will be the glory of his wife; he will carve his title in marble and bronze." But to Maurice, who was with his father at Guillery, she wrote, "Our position is no longer tenable"; and urged that Casimir come to inspect his prospective son-in-law at once. All of which showed that she was trying to make the best of an awkward situation. Maurice called the sculptor the "marble-cutter," and Casimir called him a "stone-cutter"; later he sunk to a "moulder of clay," which boded ill for his popularity with the male members of the family. The young man owned to eighty thousand francs of debts, and George settled the Hôtel de Narbonne in Paris, which had been part of her own dot, upon Solange and began to write a new novel to meet the expense attendant upon the brilliant career that awaited her daughter.

Toward the end of May the appearance of the wedding announcements caused a flutter among her friends. It had been a small and quiet affair, this wedding, and Mme. Sand apologised for the haste with which it had been arranged; it was necessary, she said, to catch the much-occupied mayor of Nérac, Solange's father, on the wing. Comment was made upon the fact that Dudevant's name did not appear on the announcements and that Clésinger had married Solange SAND. Nevertheless, Casimir was present at the ceremony in the little Nohant church, and stayed three days with his family, an event which did not lighten the gloom of the occasion.

When Solange returned from her honeymoon she found that weddings had become fashionable at Nohant. Her arch-enemy, the good and beautiful Titine, had just announced her engagement to a nice young artist friend of Maurice, named Théodore Rousseau, and Mme. Sand was beaming with satisfaction, and planning for another trousseau and dot, which would, she feared, equal if not eclipse her own. This was more than Solange could tolerate. She resolved to put an end to Titine's

social triumph at once, and with the assistance of her willing husband, she innoculated young Rousseau with some of the virus she had so skilfully introduced into Chopin's system. But this time she had Maurice to reckon with, and driven to bay, was obliged to play her trump card in order to save herself. She ended by making charges against her brother that had the desired result upon Titine's fiancé ; the engagement was broken, but in the course of the argument feeling ran so high that the " stone-cutter " attacked his new brother-in-law with a hammer, and Mme. Sand, interfering, received the blow herself. Casimir Dudevant was not the only member of the family, it seemed, who could create a scene.

In the general mêlée of guests, family and servants, Maurice was with difficulty restrained by the curé, who was present, from committing murder under just provocation. Immediately after this grand finale, the happy and successful couple departed, leaving ruin and desolation in their wake. They alighted in Paris, and still breathing out vengeance, they at once called upon Chopin.

" I have exhausted all the cup of life holds that is most desperate," George wrote to her young Proletarian friend Poncy, who was the confidant of many of her sorrows ; " It is so bitter, so incredible, that I cannot even speak of it. I am aged, sick, sad."

During all these months the little Chopin had been patiently waiting for more light on the plans, matrimonial and otherwise, of his one-time hostess. Such versions as had leaked out, in spite of warnings that he must not be disturbed with these matters until they were all settled, had not tended to soothe his irritation at the manner in which he had been excluded from the family councils. The notes that had passed between them had been short and formal on his part, short and mysterious on hers—chiefly concerned with anxiety about his health, and without allusions to the questions in which he was most interested. By the time Solange arrived in Paris, thirsting for revenge on her mother and brother, Chopin was in prime condition to take his dose in perfect good faith. There was nothing he was not ready to believe about any and all of the people with whom he had passed eight years of his life in intimate and

affectionate relations. He hastened to pour out in his letters to his mother and sisters all the scandalous stories that the Clésingers could invent. Under the direction of Solange he now saw that he had for a long time noticed signs that his hostess and Victor Borie were unduly intimate ; that Maurice and Titine were likewise unduly intimate, and that they had all been trying to get him out of the way so that he would not perceive the horrible state of things. He and Solange together worked out a sort of endless chain, by which everyone at Nohant had pretended to be courting someone else in order to deceive other people as to whom they really were courting, while the innocent Solange and the gullible musician remained the only pure and unspotted souls in this sink of intrigue and wickedness.

" Singular creature," he wrote his sister ; " she cannot tell real attachment from flattery ! With all her intelligence, a frenzy has seized her and she has ruined her life and her daughter's too. She will not wake up until her heart hurts." That, he prophesied would be soon, for Maurice would certainly desert her for his father at the first good opportunity. " If it hadn't been for me the children would both have been with their father long ago." Chopin congratulated himself that he had at least been able to hold her on the straight and narrow path for eight years, and that he had done his best to make her see that Titine would bring trouble to them all. Meanwhile, as Solange had described to him the harrowing details of her expulsion from her home and the parsimony of her cruel mother who had turned her loose on the world without a cent, simply because she did not care for her husband, and had hastened to transform her recent bridal chamber into a theatre in order to wipe out all traces of her from Nohant, Chopin tenderly offered to lend her his carriage while she was in Paris, and wrote his sister how deeply he pitied this delicately nurtured and carefully protected young girl, broken in the maternal hands so lightly and frivolously and exposed to such hardships. Solange had forgotten to mention that her mother had paid all the debts Clésinger had owned to before his marriage, and that having given the young couple the Hôtel Narbonne, which was rented in apartments, as a dot, she had not considered herself

liable for his unmentioned debts which steadily rolled up in the extravagance and irresponsibility of his mode of life. Nor had she alluded to the silver, linen and curtains, both from her own rooms at Nohant and from the closed apartment in Paris, to which she had helped herself liberally and uninvited. Chopin, whose personal grievances offered a fertile soil for the culture of suspicions, went over to the enemy, even accepting the objectionable Clésinger whose friendship with the Sand family had annoyed him so much a few months before. He grieved for this tender child obliged by debts and other private embarrassments to retreat to the protection of her lazy and selfish father at Guillery, and worried greatly over her loneliness and suffering in a desolate country-house through a terrible Gascon winter.

George had written Chopin a long letter after the wedding telling him as much of the story as she thought good for him to know, and laying down the *modus vivendi* she thought advisable for them to pursue in the future. He showed the letter to Delacroix, who declared it preposterous, and he did not take the trouble to reply. Mme. Sand had lost both her daughter and her little Chip-Chop. The Viardots, who had been on a concert trip during this perturbed period, made an ineffectual attempt at reconciliation ; Mme. Marliani, who was very ill, and died not long after, could do nothing ; Gryzmala and the Princess Czartoryski preferred a strict neutrality. The little cat, Mlle. Rozière, seized the opportunity to get back into the musician's good graces, and added fuel to the fire out of the injudicious confidences of Mme. Sand, interpreted and supplemented by Solange. The pretty temple of Love was once more desolate, the idol was gone and the altar overthrown.

" I have lived a virgin with him and with others for seven years," George wrote to Gryzmala, in what might be considered the epilogue to the wonderful letter of the summer of 1838, " It was no sacrifice, for I was weary of passion and disillusion. What I felt for him was a sort of intense maternal affection. His friends have accused me of having worn him out with the violence of my emotions ; others have said that I killed him by privation. I would have killed him had I yielded to any other emotion. If there was a woman on earth

who should have inspired him with confidence it was I. But the years of tender care and devotion were forgotten in one moment, at the first idle tale that was poured into his ears. I never really got inside his heart."

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Chip-Chop and his Hostess had just one meeting after this famous *débacle*. It was in Paris on a February day, nearly a year after the Piffoëls had made that last sojourn in the Cour d'Orléans apartment, which was now abandoned. Chopin was descending the stairs after a visit to his sick friend, Mme. Marliani, wrapped in cloaks and leaning on the arm of his Abyssinian servant, when he encountered Mme. Sand accompanied by Eugène Lambert, who had come for the same purpose. He greeted her with cold politeness. She pressed his icy, trembling hand warmly. The only words uttered were of Solange, who was still at Guillery. " How lately have you heard from your daughter ? " inquired Chopin. " Not for a week." " Then I will inform you that you are a grandmother ; Solange has a daughter, and I am happy to be the first to give you the news." And with a graceful salute he passed down the stairs. When he reached the bottom, he remembered that he had omitted the usual formula, and feeling too weak to remount the stairs he sent his servant back to tell her that " mother and child were both doing well." George impetuously descended at once and asked some affectionate questions about his own health. " I am well," he replied coldly, and motioned to the portier to open the door. " Nevertheless," he wrote to his family when describing this final meeting, " Up to the present time I have not yet recovered."

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Solange's little daughter atoned for her mistake in coming into the world six weeks before she should have decently and respectably done, by living only a week. Chopin went to England to escape the inconveniences attendant upon the revolution of 1848, in which Mme. Sand was playing a conspicuous *rôle*, and wrote to his family with some satisfaction that a newspaper in which she had been interested was dying from lack of readers, that she had been badly received by the Berry peasants since she had been mixed up in politics, and had to

take refuge, he heard, in Tours, " where she is wading in mud and taking others with her."

He returned from Scotland only to die. The letters of Mme. Sand to his sister, who came to Paris to nurse him, full of tender inquiries, remained unanswered. Mme. Sand was not permitted to join the assembly of friends and pupils who surrounded his deathbed and related such legendary and varying accounts of his last moments. His pupil, Franchomme, thought he heard the dying man murmur, " She told me I would die in her arms," but it was to Solange, and not to his " Aurore of the black eyes " that he struggled to give a last embrace. Delacroix put the final touch on this story of the Triumph of Malice by confiding to Clésinger the making of Chopin's death-mask, and the execution of the monument, for which a committee had been formed. But George Sand was incapable of resentment. " A friendship without clouds," she wrote of Delacroix in the *Histoire de Ma Vie*.

Several people were a trifle uneasy when they heard that Mme. Sand was writing her memoirs, but they had nothing to fear. Chopin had learned, with some relief, that her personal adventures would not figure conspicuously in this new book. " That is well," he said, " for the dear Mme. Sand will have many more adventures in her life before she gets old, both pleasant and disagreeable." It was too early for an autobiography yet. The public, who expected to get some racy contemporary episodes, were greatly disappointed. The first two volumes of the Memoirs were devoted to her ancestral history and extracts from her father's youthful letters, and to her own childish memories. The others were largely composed of literary essays and appreciations of her various friends. Her love affairs were treated with great discretion. It was a very exasperating book to people who enjoyed scandal.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BANQUET OF EQUALITY

"*Le peuple, le peuple ignorant, le peuple abandonné, plein de fougueuses passions qu'on excite dans un mauvais sens ou qu'on refoule, sans respect de cette force que Dieu ne lui a pourtant pas donnée pour rien.*"

Lettre à Poncy.[1]

"Do you know that they don't like you in England?" wrote one of George's friends from London. "It is one of your glories. They would gladly burn you because you once wore men's clothes." It was not the British public, it seemed, but the British Press, that had agreed to boycott the terrible Mme. Sand, who had attacked the foundations of family life—the marriage institution. To be sure, Mme. Sand had repudiated this impeachment of her novels. Very few of them were open to this objection. "Permit me to except *Lélia*," she wrote to a French critic in her own defence, "where there is not a word relating to social institutions; *Indiana*, where no adultery is committed; *Le Secrétaire Intime*, which has for its object the sweetness of conjugal fidelity; *André*, which is neither against marriage nor in favour of adulterous love; *Simon*, which ends at the altar; *Valentine*, where the old fatality intervenes to prevent the enjoyment of a second marriage for the adulterous wife; *Léone Leoni*, where there is no question of marriage." This left only *Jacques* unaccounted for among her important novels, and *Jacques*, as anyone could see, was merely a picture of self-sacrifice in the marriage relation. It all went to show how carelessly and stupidly people read. But the British critic has a passion for consistency, and an obsession for adhering to first impressions. He is also cautious about welcoming

[1] "The people, the ignorant people, the abandoned people, full of fierce passions which are excited in a wrong direction, or that are repressed without respect for this power that God, nevertheless, has not given them for nothing."—*Letter to Poncy.*

signs of amelioration prematurely lest further developments oblige him to retract. No one could foresee what new aberration might seize upon this impressionable woman ; it might even be that Communism would be the next step. And the English reviews continued to ignore her. It remained for a brave Italian political refugee, named Joseph Mazzini, who had sought shelter in England from the consequences of his efforts to create a free, united Italy, to utter the first words of appreciation of George Sand that had appeared in an English paper ; and to point out to the British public that smoking did not in itself constitute an immorality (he was a great smoker himself), that intrusion into the private life of a lady was indelicate, and that although her novels did not depict the reward of virtue and punishment of vice with the unmistakable vividness of Maria Edgeworth, it was nevertheless not indispensable to morality that the author should take upon himself the administration of justice.

The Italian patriot went even further. He interested himself in an English translation of George Sand's works, in which one of his disciples, Miss Eliza Ashurst, was collaborating, and valiantly came to the defence of the absent author when it was proposed to soften and dilute some of the episodes and sentiments in order to adapt them to the delicacy of the British reader. The morals of the young and inexperienced would, he felt sure, be properly safeguarded if a course in the novels, pure and unadulterated, were followed by a careful study of the *Lettres d'un Voyageur*. When this book was translated, he wrote a preface which claimed for it an eminent position in the soul-history of its generation.

" Let those who have never suffered from the pains of the century, and to whom life as it is to-day, without love, without common faith, seems good and natural, those who demand from existence merely a series of agreeable sensations, leave this book unread ; it is not meant for them ; its essence will escape them. Only those who have learned that life is real, life is earnest, can see its import."

Mazzini divined that part of the pain of the *Voyageur* arose from the consciousness that many of the young heroes whom she had addressed in these letters under fictitious names, and who

had saluted the vision with her at the opening of their career, had, like Hamlet, begun by believing too exclusively in themselves and ended by believing in nothing. Their mothers had said to them, " Be happy ! " and their fathers had said, " Be rich ! " but no one had said to them, " Be earnest ! " The consequence was that they were ending their lives as precocious old men, with the wrinkles of cold calculation on their brows, calling themselves free from illusions when they were only disheartened, and practical when they were only commonplace.

Joseph Mazzini had found in these letters an echo of his own grief at the desertion of many of his ardent young followers, who had lost the vision or fallen by the way. He had read them in Switzerland, whither he had fled after the failure of an uprising he had led in Savoia, and at the moment when the news of the suicide of his dearest friend, in a dungeon in Genoa, was shaking his faith in the wisdom of sacrificing so many splendid young lives in what seemed a hopeless cause. The author of the *Lettres d'un Voyageur* had also suffered much and loved much, but still called bravely from the summit of the next hill to the traveller through difficult paths. In a life devoted to the service of his people, Mazzini had not found time for the tender passions, but he believed that man and woman were two notes without which the human chord cannot be struck. He promised himself that he would one day speak face to face with this noble and sympathetic soul.

People did not talk much of telepathy in those days, else there might have been some such theory for the remarkable fact that just about that time George, sliding over precipices and glaciers in Switzerland with the Fellowes and Pictet, learned that Mazzini was in hiding in her vicinity and seriously thought of storming his refuge. There is no telling how history might have been rewritten had she persisted in her intention for she was still in her age of tempests. But she gave it up, she said, because she thought he already had enough burdens to carry without adding her agitated soul to them.

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In June, 1847, while George Sand was passing through her Via Dolorosa, after the domestic catastrophes narrated in the last chapter, she received an affectionate letter from Mazzini,

enclosing his article on her books, published in the *Monthly Chronicle*.

" You understand the sufferings of my soul," she wrote him, " its needs and its aspirations, and the sincerity of my desires. I do not thank you for a favourable article, but for loving me and calling me sister and friend. Come to me in my Vallée Noire so wild and so good. We will have many things to say to each other, and I need your counsel. I am more myself there than in Paris, where I am always sick, morally and physically." She added a word about her impulse to seek him out in Switzerland ten years before.

" You speak of sympathy that pushed you to me in Switzerland," he replied ; " it was only a movement of sympathy for one of your brothers in a persecuted faith. I turned to your pages in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* as to the caresses of a cherished sister and gathered strength from them against a crisis of discouragement that threatened madness. . . . I was thinking that perhaps I was only following a dream and had been wrong in innoculating young souls with it and tearing them from their mothers. Your *Lettres d'un Voyageur* never leave me. They gave me strength to meet this crisis. You appeared to me so beautiful, and so sad, so suffering, and yet so good and loving, that I said it was cowardly for me to break before the storm when a soul so privileged and so little understood as yours, suffered from the same *mal* and purified itself by suffering. . . . This year will not pass without my seeing you."

" This year, the most agitated and most unhappy, perhaps, of my life, will at least bring me the consolation of knowing you," answered Mme. Sand. " How good your letter is and how kind and sincere your heart. I am certain that you will do me much good and will rekindle my courage which has been hurt—but in personal matters—for some time. I have had great difficulty in maintaining myself still—I will not say believing, for faith conquered at a price is never lost,—but serene. And serenity is a duty imposed on all believing souls. It is the testimony to their religion."

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In October he came. " I am going to France only to see Lamennais and George Sand," he wrote his mother in Genoa.

Mazzini never found Paris " simpatico " ; he thought the souls of the French were at the " next to the last hour of the night." Intellectually they were advanced, but retrograde in the more earnest sentiments of duty and faith. Even Lamennais, for whom he had the greatest admiration, was rather cold and inscrutable. " I cannot help liking this Mazzini," seemed to him rather faint praise. But the warm welcome he got from the " scarlet woman " so feared by the English Press, fully compensated him for a trip of seven hours on the newly-opened railroad to Châteauroux and an additional three hours in the diligence. All this effort and fatigue for the sake of three days at Nohant! But they were three days of constant intercourse, and they were sufficient to make an indelible impression.

" Mme. Sand is all that we had pictured her and more," he wrote his English friend, Jane Welsh Carlyle. " The sister of the whole world in her thought. Not a shadow of vanity or pride about her. She is dreadfully unhappy just now but exceptionally healthy, nevertheless, in mind and life, practising all the ideas of equality and love that she preaches in her novels."

He admired her noble simplicity, even in the way she smoked her cigarette (a great bond), and saw in her qualities that would do honour to a priest—a priest of the future, as he should be. He carried away a sense of an ineffable friendship that he counted as the most beautiful of his years of exile.

Those three days' conversation made a large breach in the walls of Leroux's Universal Religion, whose application to the present needs of humanity Mazzini regarded as a bit impractical. While acknowledging that Leroux was one of the three master minds of France—the other two being Sand and Lamennais—the Italian patriot was a man of action, and believed the time had come for the thinkers to give the soldiers a chance. " While such men as Leroux preach, the world dies," he said. " They stand by the bedside of the dying and talk about how to understand life. It is action that the dying need, not philosophy."

George had been suspicious for some time that Leroux was too visionary for present needs. She now perceived that he was

in a state of metaphysical intoxication, and had left his disciples in the middle of the road.

" A dogma cannot be elaborated in one's room," said Mazzini ; " it is found. If Jesus had been content to write a book or a journal, there would have been one more philosopher, but no religion. You saw this flaw in Leroux when you depicted him as Trismegistus in the *Countess of Rudolstadt*. The past is only memory, the future is speculation ; our needs are present. Action is the only thing that produces or reveals."

George began to see that the Good Men had been digging the road long enough ; it was time for the Great Men to march over it. She translated Mazzini's letter to Pio Nono that urged the Pope to take a stand in favour of the Italian Republic, and sent it to the Paris papers, with a commendatory introduction. " If he doesn't speak out now," she told Mazzini, " he will be the last Pope. It will be because he has lost his faith." But the papers were slow to print it, and Louis Blanc warned her that it was not the moment to criticise the Pope's conduct. The good Pio Nono qualified Mazzini's appeal as " Utopian." He protested against this effort to make a Napoleon out of a poor country parson. " The Utopia will devour him one day," observed Mazzini ; " him and his dead thing." There was still a great deal of digging necessary before the strong men could advance, it seemed.

George Sand was a little paralysed by her awe of this " last of the great men of old, and first of the new," but her respect was tinged with tenderness. He needed no encouragement, she saw that plainly, for he had enough courage for the whole world. But he did need affection, as all complete souls do, in return for what they give to others ; and she rendered this faithfully, out of the abundance of her maternal heart.

In cleaning his room after his departure, the servant found a ring he had lost, bearing the device, *Ti conforti amor ma*. It had been a gift from his mother, from whom his agitated life had separated him for many years. When asked for directions for its return, he begged Mme. Sand to accept it as a souvenir of his visit.

" I loved you before I saw you," he wrote ; " I love you much more to-day after my visit to Nohant. I feel something

within me which tells me that we will love each other still more somewhere else. Every holy affection is a promise ; it is the bud of a flower that will burst elsewhere in the sun of God."

" You are good and great and I love you for ever," she replied. "My heart is broken but the pieces are good yet. I am firmly convinced that in the new existence nothing will be lost, and that at the hour of our death your spirit will visit mine as it had already done before we exchanged any outward signals."

Mazzini brought back to his London friends who admired her the sad news that George Sand did not like England. She regarded it as the land of snobbery and utilitarianism, and the people, all except Byron, were calculating and egotistical. And Byron couldn't live in England ! But this did not cool the warm friendship of her little group of English admirers. They urged her to escape from her personal vexations by a visit to London, cordially offering the hospitality of their homes. Eliza Ashurst, who was translating her books and who was one of Mazzini's adorers, spent a few days at Nohant and failed to modify George's prejudices against her countrymen.

" I have seen your Eliza Ashurst, and I tell you frankly that she impressed me quite differently from you. . . . She must have fine qualities but she is infatuated with herself ; she has the vice of the age. I think the reading of my books has not been good for her, and the question of sex, in an acceptation in which the thought of neither man or woman should rest exclusively, effaces with her the idea of the human being, which is always the same." Miss Ashurst, it appeared, had a sex complex. While her conduct seemed to be blameless, her mind was not. Mme. Sand preferred a woman with a dozen lovers that she never mentioned, to one who had none but talked continually about them. Eliza struck her as sentimental, speaking of Mazzini as if he were a hero in a novel, and speculating as to his opinion of women. He had no time to think about them at all, Mme. Sand assured her.

" In short, a real Englishwoman, a prude without modesty ; and again very English, for the real Englishman thinks himself the finest man of the finest nation in the world."

* * * * *

George Sand had not discarded Communism, when she began

(*Musée Carnavalet*)

MME. DUPIN AND HER SON MAURICE, GRANDMOTHER AND FATHER OF GEORGE SAND

to distrust Leroux's pacifism ; but she acknowledged that the word was not in good standing. The bourgeois had unfortunately used it carelessly to denote some sort of a chimerical sect that preached the Agrarian Law, pillage, the destruction of the family and community of goods and women. Equality of property had an ugly sound, and had always frightened her a little, although while Michel was broadening her she faced it bravely. " If you proclaim a Republic," she had written in the first flush of her democratic ardour, " you may take all that I have. I have lands ; give them to those that have none ; I have a garden, make it a pasture for your horses ; I have a house, make it a hospital for your wounded ; I have wine, drink it ; I have tobacco, smoke it ; I have printed books, stuff them into your muskets. In all my patrimony there are only two things whose loss would be cruel to me—the portrait of my old grandmother, and six square feet of earth, planted with roses and cypresses. It is there that she sleeps by my father." This was the limit to which the blood of the Dupins would yield to that of the Delabordes. There was a distinction to be observed, she finally decided, between social and individual property ; in the Communism that was hers, houses, fields, gardens, clothes and wives, belonged to the latter class.

This sentiment about her ancestral ties was deep-rooted and it required some ingenuity to reconcile it with her principles. In *Piccinino* she developed an exceedingly original reason for not abolishing noble *blasons* and family portrait galleries. The arms represent the history and records of heroic deeds, and the portraits of our ancestors are a stimulus to imitation and to *noblesse oblige*. A story was narrated in *Piccinino* of an unworthy descendant of a long line of distinguished men, who committed suicide in the presence of his family portraits because he could not endure the look of reproach in their eyes. But the rich and powerful should not have the exclusive privilege to such incentives to character. George's democracy was a process of levelling-up, not down. Why should the virtues of her old carpenter's honest grandfather, or of the miller's forefathers or those of the revered flaxcomber of La Châtre, be relegated to oblivion, their very names forgotten by their descendants ? " Aristocratic Communism," perhaps

hers might have been called, a *nuance* the modern Socialists seemed to have overlooked. The only people whose interests were not protected were the grocers and the rich bourgeois, very unpopular classes with her always, who were likely to fare badly in her socialist Utopia.

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Maurice had gone to Paris for the Carnival. His mother was too sad and too poor and too busy to accompany him. She was worried by heavy financial engagements which she found it difficult to meet. There were notes falling due to the Duvernets and Planets, who had made her large loans for the dots of her two brides, Solange and Augustine. She was trying to save the old Hôtel Narbonne from being sold at auction for the taxes which her bankrupt son-in-law had omitted to pay. She was defendant in a suit brought by the *Société des Gens des Lettres* on account of her novel, *La Mare au Diable*. She was hard at work on her Memoirs, which would have to pay for all these extraordinary expenses.

She was not alone at Nohant, however. Augustine was still there, busy with preparations for her wedding to a modest young clerk named Bertholdi, upon whom she had bestowed her heart after Solange had wrecked her little romance with Maurice's friend. And little Lambert was with her and Victor Borie, who was a communist too, and who was writing a book on the Labour Question, under her supervision. Maurice's vivacious letters from Paris lighted up the gloom into which his absence always plunged her. One of them described the excitement over the Ministry's prohibition of a republican banquet arranged by the twelfth Arrondissement.

" Mark my words," cried Borie excitedly ; " that means revolution ! The Orléans *régime* is doomed."

" There is no such good luck for us. This is nothing but a flurry, an intrigue of departing and entering Ministers ; a passage of arms between Thiers and Guizot." And she went on with her game of " Patience."

" Nevertheless," she said to herself, " I will coax Maurice to come home. If there should happen to be any disturbance, I don't want him mixed up in it. It isn't as if there would be anything seriously accomplished."

But Maurice did not accept her invitation to return. Paris was entirely too interesting. George decided to see for herself what was keeping him there, and taking Borie for protection departed to join him.

She found that the Revolution was already an accomplished fact.

" *Vive la Republique !* " she wrote to Poncy, two weeks later. " I arrive, I hasten ! I see the last barricades fall at my feet. I have seen the people, the great, sublime, generous people, re-united to the heart of France. They are the greatest people in the Universe."

She was drunk with joy. To have gone to sleep in the mire and waked up in Heaven !

All her friends were in the new Provisional government, all the men for whose paper, *La Réforme*, she had been writing without pay, for the sake of the cause. That uncompromising Socialist, Louis Blanc, with the large calm eyes and the innocent face of a young cherub, and the tenacity of a Dictator, was installed in the Luxembourg, in charge of the workmen's interests, and she dined there with him. Ledru-Rollin, the conciliatory and engaging Minister of the Interior, besought her advice in his task of replacing the Orléanist officials in Berry with tried and true Republicans. Lamartine, the Lafayette of the hour, stood by her side as she watched from Guizot's windows the inspired proletarians march by with huge Liberty trees, festooned with the tricolour, to be planted in the public squares. A little insufficient, perhaps, all these good men, for the task that would demand the genius of Napoleon and the heart of Jesus, but all had the best intentions in the world, and the young Republic was just like a big happy family, forgetting all personal grievances and ambitions in the great opportunity of the hour.

Her heart was brimming, her head on fire ; her spleen and her private troubles were forgotten. " I am only twenty years old," she cried, with a faint reminiscence of the romantic carnival she had joined after the Revolution of 1830. That, too, had promised so much !

Eager to be of use, she looked about for an instrument for her song, a paper in which she could preach democracy to her

people. With the aid of Borie she started the *Cause du Peuple*, a fortnightly, which lived through three issues. By her influence with the government, Fleury, Duvernet, Girerd and several other Berry friends were given local appointments, but Michel was not among the favoured. He had betrayed and abandoned his democratic friends in their evil days. He must give them a pledge of his loyalty now, and perhaps he might be elected to the National Assembly. Maurice was made Mayor of Nohant-Vic, although he lacked the legal requirements of age. He departed to assist in revolutionising his new territory. "Everyone must do his bit, now," his mother said; even Eugène Lambert could preach republicanism to the peasants at Nohant.

She flew back and forth between Nohant and Paris, organising clubs, banquets and fêtes, and processions to plant Liberty trees, in imitation of those with which Paris bristled. The republic was proclaimed at Nohant with great ceremony. The little old church outside the gates was decorated with branches and laurel wreaths, and a bier was raised for the funeral service commemorative of those who had lost their lives on the barricades in the defence of the Republic. A sixteenth-century culverin was brought to the green by a cortège of children, and fired the salute. The gars and peasants of the new National Guard, came from their farms in their sabots and long blue tunics, having received their first drill only a few hours before. The women and children and old men carried banners, and headed by the curé and the youthful Mayor Sand, the procession planted the newly blessed Liberty tree and set up a tricoloured banner of the Republic to the sound of drums and the *cornemuse*. George Sand promptly wrote an account of the fête for the *Réforme*. "It will flatter them to read about it in a Paris paper," she said.

Notwithstanding the enthusiastic leadership of the Nohant châtelaine, the Revolution did not prosper in Berry. It was not among the simple, stolid farming folk of the Indre that socialistic ideas were easily understood; they left that for the industrial classes. She swung her cap energetically, but got only a feeble response from her beloved peasants. Maurice was instructed to form a Republican club, excluding the

women and children and loafers who would only want to dance and shout, and to read to the earnest ones the bulletins that the Provisional Government was posting on the walls of Paris and sending into the provinces in order to educate the prospective voters under the newly proclaimed law of Universal Suffrage, as to the reasons and objects of all the good things that were being done for them. Particularly did these simple folk require to have the augmentation of the taxes—unfortunately necessitated by an empty treasury left behind by the departing Orléans *régime*—elucidated for them. Maurice was advised to read to the National Guard his mother's explanations of this unpopular measure, that would at first sight seem to lack the blessings the people's government had promised. " Ask them into the kitchen and offer them refreshments," she wrote him. " There is plenty of wine this year."

The new government was busy abolishing everything that could be supposed to " offend human dignity," and her zealous young friend Louis Blanc was introducing his socialist reforms as fast as he could ; abolition of the death penalty, universal suffrage, equality of salaries, national ateliers for the unemployed. These improvements had to be explained to a people who had had liberty so unexpectedly thrust upon them. George Sand's pen, which had received its political initiation under the discipline of the disgraced Michel, was gladly invoked by Ledru-Rollin, the Minister of the Interior, for this purpose. She wrote sixteen of the twenty-five unsigned bulletins that were issued by the Provisional Government in preparation for the first elections under that panacea she had so often invoked, Universal Suffrage. She also wrote a Prologue with Viardot, called *Le Roi Attend*, to be presented at a great public performance of one of Molière's plays, with Rachel and Samson in the cast, at the newly baptised *Théâtre de la République* (late Théâtre Français). Molière and his troupe appeared in this little piece, and Molière uttered these noble republican sentiments : " I see a king, but he is no longer called Louis XIV. ; he is called the People, the Sovereign People." And Pauline Viardot sang afterwards a new version of the *Marseillaise*. The sight of the proletarian audience thrilled George. They were perfectly quiet and attentive in spite of the bour-

geois ridicule of this quixotic offering. There were only fifty *gentlemen* in the whole house ; no one threw orange peel, and the most religious silence reigned.

But the new Republic was getting tied up in the inevitable dissensions and plots and counterplots, and in addition there was every reason to believe that the newly enfranchised people did not know the names of their true friends and would stupidly vote their familiar old enemies back into power. A demonstration in protest against this possibility unfortunately followed so close upon a very rash remark made by George Sand in one of her bulletins (soon to become famous as Bulletin XVI.) that she was subjected to the furious onslaught of the bourgeois, and some censure by her friends in the government. People began to write from the provinces to inquire how they were to explain that bulletin. " Say that it was my stupidity," she said, " and that it chanced by an accident to get by the authorities." " All the same," she wrote to Girerd, who was one of the inquirers, " I am not sorry I said it. It takes a stupid woman to utter a perfectly evident truth that everyone thinks but no one would dream of saying."

This is practically what she said : " If the people don't get unanimity in the election for the new Assembly, they will go to the Champs de Mars and vote a new Constitution and will carry it to the Assembly and make them sign it."

This sounded dangerously like a threatened *coup-d'état*. It placed her friends in an awkward position, especially since the idea did not originate in a woman's brain. This was the last bulletin she wrote. " I detest politics," she decided. " The clumsy and insincere art of substituting logic for truth ! Women have no business with polemics."

Disaster, so long menacing the Republic, broke loose with the election, and an invasion of the Assembly by a procession of Louis Blanc's working-men ended in bloodshed in the streets of Paris. The National Guard fired on the Sovereign people in front of the Hôtel de Ville and George Sand's friend, Armand Barbès, whom she had enlisted in the ranks of Louis Blanc's active sympathisers, was among those arrested and sent to the dungeons of Vincennes. The Sovereign people had repudiated Communism, crying " Down with it ! " Louis

Blanc found it convenient to escape to England with a false passport and the Socialist party had lost its prestige.

She sadly confessed that they had asked more of the people than it could give.

" What can Socialism do when the ideal abandons the hearts of men ? " she wrote Mazzini, who was in Italy refusing to accept Carlo Alberto in place of a Republic. " And was it a real resurrection towards which we sprang ? or only a prophetic agitation, a brief precursor of life, after which we turn to slumber again for a while ? "

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At a literary luncheon given in her honour by Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton)—he was a violent faddist, and George Sand was his fad just then—she sat next to De Tocqueville, who was in line for the high seats from which so many of her friends had been recently driven. De Tocqueville was entertaining prejudices against Mme. Sand, which were of a purely personal nature ; someone had reported that she had refused to read his recent book on America because he had omitted to send her a copy. Contrary to expectation he found her charming, although the republican simplicity of her dress was, he thought, a trifle studied. He was astonished at the intelligence and frankness with which she discussed the resources, number, organisation and disposition of the Paris workingmen. " Warn your friends not to drive my people too hard," she said ; " they are in a position to turn and rend you, and I am trying to teach them patience." De Tocqueville was much impressed, and disposed to revise his preconceptions of Mme. Sand.

Incidentally, Monckton Milnes had shown himself a little crude in his selection of guests for this very small and select function, since he had included Prosper Mérimée. He probably was not familiar with the gossip of the salons. Mérimée, who was slightly short-sighted, sat opposite Mme. Sand and observed that she kept her eyes demurely on her plate. They had no conversation. He inquired of his neighbour who this interesting woman might be. The neighbour was pleased to enlighten him. " Ah, how she has improved," ejaculated Mérimée, adjusting his monocle.

De Tocqueville's party ended by driving out Mme. Sand's, and they pushed her people rather too hard. Again there was fighting and bloodshed in the streets of Paris, and the Socialists scattered and the National Assembly was dissolved. George Sand hastened to burn her private papers and thought it prudent to write to the Prefect of Police denying that she was the lady who had harangued the crowds in a proletarian café during the uprising of the previous month, although the lady had been pointed out to her by a bystander as " Mme. Sand." She was not a public speaker, she assured him, and she belonged to no feminist clubs. She believed firmly that woman's place was in the home and not on public platforms, and she was glad to take refuge in Nohant. Her heart was sick and her ears still ringing with the menaces of the poor misguided people in whom she had placed her faith. It was hard to have to hear even the Berry peasants, who had enjoyed for years her bounty and her personal ministrations, shout, " Down with Mme. Dudevant ! Down with Maurice ! Down with Communism ! " when they passed her gates. The politicians, she knew, were trading on the superstitions and ignorance of her poor people, and had told them that a Communist was a dreadful ogre, who would steal their money and their wives, and devour their children and burn their cottages. It was rumoured that she had the proscribed members of the late Provisional Government and a quantity of arms and ammunition hidden in her attic. At Paris the papers reported that she had fled to Tours with Gustave Thoré, a socialist writer.

" She has packed her furniture and cigars," said *Charivari*, " and is changing her residence. Paris will not miss her. What will you do with Thoré, Mme. Sand ? Will you take him to Tours with you ? You must first find out how Tours will receive the gift. They may be alarmed at his red beard and his turned-up nose, his terrible hat and his Louis XV. waistcoat. Mme. Sand will say to the Tourangeaux, ' Here is your ideal ! Here is the man we dreamed of ! ' But the Tourangeaux will find the culture of prunes more inspiring."

Mme. Sand calmly ignored all this abuse, and kept her tears for the people who had been invited to a banquet and had shown

that their table manners were not sufficiently good to enable them to profit by it.

" What has happened in Milan is mortal for my soul," she wrote Mazzini. " What has happened in Paris must have lacerated yours. I want no comfort. I have strength to drink the cup and I do not want them to cover it with honey for me."

" Your persistence in talking Communism has harmed the cause," replied Mazzini.

" You are mistaken," she protested. " I have never walked nor talked nor acted with those who call themselves the communistic school. Communism is my personal doctrine, but I have never preached it in times of storm, and have always said that its reign was still far off."

" Shall I tell you my last thought about France ? " he asked. " I remember telling it to you in your home. . . . You have closed an era ! You will not be the ones to open the coming one. . . . My country is the only one that has died to rise again."

Just a year later, while the French army was besieging Garibaldi's young Republic in Rome and the French guns were bombarding the villas on the Janiculum, he wrote her :

" I am present at the death agony of a great city and my soul agonises with her. The French do not even respect our hospitals ; four bombs fell yesterday on St. Spirito. Never in my life have I seen such baseness ! "

" Rome fought, Rome believed, and we have killed her ! . . . Don't weep for those who are dead, don't weep for those who will die ; weep for me who do nothing, think nothing ! " she answered. Her pen was idle, for there was no sale for books, just then. Her paper had been fined and wiped out of existence and its poor editor was imprisoned. " Who paid for the fine banquet our commune gave, in its first flush of Republican enthusiasm, for Ledru-Rollin ? I did. No matter about the money, but where is the devotion of all those who came to a free dinner, got excited and talked for a week ? They have cooled off and now they say they did not know what it was about." She was ready to acknowledge that the French were a blind, credulous, ignorant, ungrateful, stupid nation—in short bourgeois ; but still there was hope. All that the National Assembly had done had been swept away—except Universal

Suffrage. That was the germ of free institutions, and a sublime minority in the industrial towns still carried in its flanks the People of the Future.

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On the wave of Universal Suffrage there was lifted into a house divided against itself a kinsman of the Great Napoleon, concealing under a timid and awkward exterior ambitions nurtured during years of confinement in the fortress of Ham. He offered himself as a candidate for the office of President of the Republic. "This man is a *crétin*," they said, and no one took him seriously. But a manifesto promising everything that everybody wanted, and five and a half million votes, carried Louis Napoleon into the Élysée. He diagnosed the complaint of the moribund Republic as due to an excess of freedom. "Liberty," he said, "has never created a desirable edifice; it crowns it when established." So he promptly threw most of the remedies of the Republican doctors out of the window. George Sand, who in her discouragement had been reviving classical arguments in favour of suicide, suddenly took heart, and scandalised her friends by declaring that as "the people accept him, we must accept him!" One never can tell what a woman, especially a romantic woman, is going to do in a political crisis. But she had remembered that Prince Louis had sent her a pamphlet, written in prison, on the "Extinction of Poverty," full of good socialist ideas and exhibiting a tender heart and real sympathy with the downtrodden. Who could say that a benevolent autocrat might not accomplish more for the cause than the great and unwieldy body who had blindly entrusted to him the presidency of their Republic? The glamour of a great name blinded her, even when it was represented by a pompous, short-legged, sentimental little man with a ridiculous moustache. Her father's worship of Bonaparte, in whose armies he had fought, was a sacred family tradition. Among her earliest remembrances was that of being lifted on someone's shoulder to see his set, stern, sad face pass through the cheering crowds. She hated a tyrant race but she yielded to sentiment, with that heart of hers that was always running away with her head.

Before the new president could lay the foundations of his

edifice he had to drain the ground, and it appeared that a large proportion of the Republican party had contributed to its miasmic conditions. The prefects of the provinces were asked to furnish lists of the heads of all actively or potentially dangerous men in their districts, and very soon one half of the population was so busy denouncing the other half that nearly twenty-five thousand persons proved to be either compromised or inculpated. Among these unfortunate victims of Louis Napoleon's zeal for building, many of George's Berry friends and hundreds of her proletarian protégés were condemned to internment, exile, perpetual imprisonment or deportation to Algiers.

Up to that time, Mme. Sand had made no effort to recall to Prince Louis the very affectionate and intimate correspondence they had carried on before his escape from the fortress of Ham. She had asked for her political dismissal, she told her friends, not of the new President, but of God whom she knew better than any of the other potentates. But now she believed that the time had come for refreshing the President's memory concerning some noble and humanitarian sentiments he had entertained while languishing in captivity himself, and she wrote begging for an interview. Prince Louis was not the man to turn away an attractive lady. The interview was graciously granted and passed off very pleasantly. The Prince seemed to her good and gentle, anxious to do right, and quite ignorant of the injustices that were being done in his name. He agreed with her that it was monstrous in this day and generation to strike people down for their opinions only, for inoffensive " interior resistances " such as she had entertained herself at first, but which were sure to pass off after quiet reflection. " Ask me any favour you wish," he said gallantly ; and when she begged for a general amnesty, he seemed to listen attentively. Later, after talking with some of the prisoners, she returned with specific names of unconverted Republicans for whose good behaviour she volunteered to be responsible. He assured her that the sentences of these unfortunate men would be lightened, but in the tangle of passing through so many hands some of the papers she presented were mislaid, and many of the President's promises were overlooked.

While she succeeded in getting some of her friends liberated or their sentences of deportation changed to exile, there were still many who had been forgotten, and it was no longer necessary for Mazzini to pity her inactivity. " I am not a Mme. De Staël," she protested, but she manifested much of the perseverance and bull-dog tenacity of that clever and efficient lady who had been the *bête-noire* of the first Napoleon. Only, instead of the flower of the nobility of France, her sympathies were in behalf of the humble working men or the over-zealous citizens of small provincial towns at whom the " armed hand " of her benevolent autocrat had blindly struck. Her dear friend Alphonse Fleury had been implicated and had fled to Brussels with a passport she procured for him and 1,000 francs she borrowed from Duvernet's father-in-law. He forbade her by all that was holy to try to get him pardoned, but she ignored his outraged dignity. Duvernet and Planet were suspects. Hetzel, her publisher, two of Leroux's sons-in-law, Néraud's son-in-law, Émile Aucante, a young clerk of Planet's who had been intimate at Nohant, Gilland the son-in-law of her old proletarian poet, Magu, Fulbert Martin, president of one of the workmen's clubs in Paris, Agricole Perdiguier and Francoeul Patereau, the vine-dresser, one of her favourite proletarian guests, who eluded the police for months after his condemnation, hiding in barns and in ditches and bushes, and even at Nohant, until he was finally caught ; these were only a few of the unfortunate " suspects " to whose liberation she devoted herself.

The news soon spread that Mme. Sand had influence with Prince Louis, and she was deluged with letters from frantic mothers, and appeals from starving wives, with helpless children clinging to their skirts. To all she lent a sympathetic ear, gave or begged temporary relief, and narrated their pitiful stories with the colourful pen that had written *Indiana*. She took an obscure and inexpensive lodging in Paris, as a more convenient base of operations, and worked night and day, trudging from the ante-room of Persigny, the Minister of the Interior, to the offices of the Prefect of Police, and back again to the Élysée, and thence to Prince Jerome, the President's cousin. She visited prisons, carried medicine, books, food, money, to the

sick, composed " declarations " for the accused, helped to raise a fund to provide for their families, and wrote long letters to her poor friend, Barbès, in his dungeon at Vincennes. When the Orsini attempt evoked another " Terror " on the part of the Government, she sent more letters to Louis Napoleon.

" I demand pardon for all those of the Department of the Indre who are condemned to deportation. On my knees I demand it. I know them all ; there is not one of them who is capable of conspiracy against you. . . . Listen to a white haired (!) woman who begs upon her knees—a woman a hundred times calumniated, but who always comes out blameless ; who adjures none of her beliefs and who believes she is not perjuring herself in trusting you."

But justice moves slowly, even when promises come affably and easily. It was more than a year before George got all her petitions answered and her friend's sentences commuted or discharged. The general amnesty so graciously promised was ten years in coming. In the meantime she witnessed indignantly the exodus of her Châteauroux prisoners for the fortress of Bicêtre, chained like galley slaves, and trudging over the road on foot, yoked with thieves and prostitutes, to Marseilles, where they were to embark for Africa. Her friends reproached her for lack of heroism in standing for her principles. " I have seen too much misery and suffering to go on treading the winepress," she answered. " It is not for those that go ; I see those that stay behind, the wives and mothers and the starving children."

Gradually the star of hope removed its beams from over the imposing head and fierce moustachios of Louis Napoleon. " He is no longer master of himself, if he has ever been," she admitted. " The first time I saw him he impressed me as one in the hands of Fate. The second time, I saw that he could still fight. Now I see him no more, but I see those who surround him and I believe the man is lost." After his *dictature* had assumed the form of a series of fantastic surprises that even her ingenuity could not explain away, he became " our droll little boy of an emperor, who abandons his pretty little Pope, who clasps England to his heart, and after having invited all Europe to breakfast, gives her to understand that the soup-pot is upset and she had better stay at home ! "

While in certain lowly and confiding circles George's efforts with Louis Napoleon had been appreciated on their face value, and earned for her the titles of " dear and excellent protectress," the " Saint of Berry," and " Our Lady of Bon Sécours," there were many Republicans who resented her interference and accused her of secretly compacting with the enemy in order to aid her personal friends, and incidentally herself. Especially in the foreign Press was she represented as hanger-on in the ante-chambers of the Élysée, who prostituted the fine sentiments of her proletarian novels to the interests of the Dictator. " Don't talk to me any more about what people say," she protested. " I am disgusted enough as it is, and do not need to dig in that mud ! "

The criticism that hurt most perhaps, came from Mazzini, who like all great leaders of men, not parties, admitted no compromise, and despised opportunism. He gave little weight to her plea that as five million people not more than a tenth of whom could be reasonably supposed to have read Leroux, Louis Blanc, or the other twenty different shades of socialist writers, had decided the fate of France by their votes, the scapegoat of communism might be dismissed from responsibility for the downfall of republicanism. It was wholly feminine logic, this idea of accepting Force because it was in the service of an idea, Mazzini perceived. And when she on her side attributed the defection of many of his old adherents in Italy to his own intolerance, his exclusion of certain ideas because of the mistakes and faults of some of their representatives, he found it hard to forgive her. A phrase about " the pride of a pontiff who cries, *There shall be no saints except those of my church*," evoked vehement reproaches at the implication of vanity. George tried to placate him.

" May I be hanged if I said anything except that it would be vainglory for anyone to think that one man could do the awakening, when it must be an act of collective faith." Certainly *he* did not know the meaning of the word personal ambition, of that she was sure, but what a time he had taken to cry out to a bleeding, defeated country. " You have lost France ! " That was indeed pride ; the sacred malady that touches only superior souls !

" The day that you submitted to the first *coup d'état*, the one giving Louis Napoleon the presidency for ten years," he retorted, " you and I parted company ! "

Serious affections, like filial love, are founded on a great respect. When our parents are unjust we do not contradict them, but wait until they open their eyes. And if he would only open his eyes, George still believed that he would agree with her that the Republic was born in France the day that Universal Suffrage was proclaimed, and had never died. They were all republicans now, and there was not a single aristocrat who did not feel when he went to vote that the lowest peasant was his equal. It might be that it had been premature, that the people were not educated up to it yet, but they were initiated into the idea of equality, and while they were retrograding in the exercise of this right they were advancing in the consciousness of its possession.

Mazzini concluded that considerable confusion reigned in the social ideas of his dear Mme. Sand, as much perhaps as in the mind of her dear Socialists. He had mistaken the passion of an impressionable artist for the utterances of a sincere and clear-eyed high priestess.

" Yes, you are right," she said humbly. " I am an artist, first and before everything ; I have no wit for politics and theories, and have always, I suspect, been of the wood of which dupes are made. I can only love, believe, and worship excessively."

" How could we not love our country ? " she wrote to Barbès in his dungeon ; " In spite of all our griefs, real and imaginary, it represents through all its vicissitudes the most advanced ideas in the Universe."

And how could she not continue to love her people, those grave, absolute peasants, with their extraordinary penetration, their steadfastness, their bursts of simple eloquence, their language and manners as noble as the great lords ?—superior men, rising above the level to which they had been forced, and for whom it was only a matter of putting them on their plane.

" Then when the upstarts have devoured each other, and are buried under the ruins of their own creation, the people will awake from its meditations, and being the only surviving power,

the only one they could not destroy, will sit down at the banquet that has been preparing for it."

Meanwhile, she saw that there was nothing for her to do but to groan and pray over the New Jerusalem, that had lost its gods and had not yet saluted its new Messiah.

* * * * *

Walking in the fields around Nohant with Rollinat, and talking of republicanism, they came to a bank sweet with wild thyme, where the overhanging trees invited to repose.

" In this very spot," he said, " you once told me the story of François the Foundling, as our old *chanvreur* had told it to you when you were a little girl. Why don't you immortalise our simple peasant tales and our picturesque peasant speech in a series of stories related in that same familiar style ? "

" How long ago that seems," she mused, " after all we have passed through ! Yet it is always the same Nature that breathes around us ; the night is always pure, the stars will always shine ; the wild thyme will always smell sweet. Art, like Nature, is always beautiful, and God is always good. His breath will re-animate the lyre so long mute. And since we cannot give the calm of nature itself to those unhappy prisoners whose lyres are broken in the tempest, let us try to express it in poetry and perhaps it will reach them that way.

" Since this is so, let us return to our *moutons*, that is, to our shepherds ! "

And on the morrow she took up her pen so long idle and dedicated the tales of the *Veillées du Chanvreur* to her imprisoned friends.

And Mazzini, still dreaming and plotting and struggling for a free Italy, heard her little shepherd's flute piping so bravely in the fields of the Vallée Noire. And after two years his wound was healed and he could write her :

" I love you as in the day of our first meeting. I think of you very often. I re-read your books. I try to read everything you write. I wept, I know not why, when I read *Laure*. I thought I found in it a perfume of the past, which moved me strangely. I do not know why I tell you this. I am convinced that you think that I have changed toward you. But I have not changed."

CHAPTER XV

PUPPETS AND PEOPLE

" Quel sera donc l'élément de certitude du succès? Prenez-en votre parti; il n'y en a pas. Une représentation sera toujours un coup de dès, où la main tremble à celui qui les a pipé, mais où celui à qui sa conscience d'artiste ne reproche rien peut porter beaucoup de calme, et prévoir la mauvaise chance avec beaucoup de philosophie."

Préface au Théâtre Complet.[1]

One of Lucrezia Floriani's children, whose name was Célio, inherited his mother's artistic tastes and became an impresario of private theatricals. As a character in a novel entitled *Le Château des Désertes*, he displayed ingenuity, not only as a scene-painter and stage-mechanic, but as an actor-playwright, and illustrated how amusingly and profitably the long winter evenings in a remote country-house may be passed, by employing to good advantage the gifts which each one, however humble, chances to possess. Like Célio, Maurice Sand had felt the call of the blood, the impulse of that talent with which the resourceful Mlle. de Verrières had whiled away the dull days for Marshal Saxe's staff between campaigns.

The creation of the Nohant theatre, like all true art, was spontaneous, but the spark had been kindled by the magic touch of Chopin. It was a sort of unconscious legacy of a departing guest, which gave direction and significance to the family mania for masquerade and buffoonery. One evening, just before his official retirement from the affairs of the Sand household, while the irrepressible " young people," who were responsible for so many of his chagrins, were capering aimlessly about the salon, costumed as bandits, clowns, Turks,

[1] " What then is the element of success? Make up your mind to it; there is none. A performance is always a throw of the dice, and the hand of him who has loaded them trembles, but he whose artist's conscience does not reproach him is calm and faces bad luck philosophically."—*Preface to Collected Plays.*

gypsies—whatever outlandish personages a raid on the attic chests and wardrobes had suggested—he unexpectedly fell in with their merry humour, and began to improvise music to fit the costumes. The masqueraders took the cue, and the spirit of the master's music gradually took possession of their posturings and gestures, and pantomime was born at Nohant. When Chopin departed for Paris, and the inspiration of music waned, Pantomime resolved itself into Comedy, and the Théâtre de Guignole was founded, with the astonished family portraits and two protesting pet dogs for audience.

The Commedia dell' Arte of Nohant, in the style of the Italian popular improvisations, first assumed conscious and coherent form on Christmas Eve, making its *début* with a startling melodrama, entitled *The Cavern of Crime* (afterwards improved to *Tavern*). George Sand played a dramatic masculine *rôle*, and the Duteils, father and son, were invited to take part. An imposing illustrated invitation and programme, combined, indicated graphically the costumes the actor-guests were expected to furnish—an attorney's gown, three pairs of long stockings, and (for health) flannel shirt and drawers. The cast included such well-known local comedians as *Morrissens*, *Lembaire*, *Beauriz*, *G. Sans.* and *Dutheil Paire*. The closing tableau was clearly symbolised by a plump, steaming turkey, surrounded by chestnuts. The première was an unprecedented success and a repertoire of twelve plays was eventually formed, with fortnightly performances.

The situations and *dénouements* of the dramas at the Théâtre de Guignole had the charm of being as unexpected for the actors as for the public. A title, a cast, a stage setting—the rest depended on the wit of the players and the audible protestations and interpolations of the spectators, animal or human. For example:

Title: *Le Druide Peu Délicat.*

Stage: indicated by a line chalked on the floor.

Forest: represented by a green screen.

Dolmans: represented by three sofa-cushions.

Druid: costume, white curtain with red border, green cotton gloves, blue spectacles, and crown of leaves.

Young *Première :* in pointed cap, tight purple silk garment, and carrying a dilapidated guitar.

Public, consisting of one poodle, rushes upon the stage, barking ; Druid seizes dog, recognises in him the Genius of the Forest, and prepares to immolate him upon a dolman ; young *Première* rushes to the rescue of Innocent Victim ; guitar demolished and Victim escapes.

The only blemish on the brilliancy of such scenes was the difficulty of bringing them to a satisfactory conclusion. With actors whose ingenuity and wits had been sharpened by a long apprenticeship in proverbs and charades, incidents succeeded each other so rapidly under the spur of the unexpected, that the plays ended only when the participants were exhausted. It was agreed that the rules of art must not be sacrificed to the inspiration of the actors and the next step was the preparation of scenarios. These were generally written and read at dinner, and the parts assigned at dessert, after which the cast was allowed an hour to prepare costumes and *rôles*. The dialogues, except for classical passages such as maledictions, benedictions, and declamations, were still left to the wit of the actor, assisted by the interpolation and emotions of the audience, to which, as the theatre developed, a sprinkling of humans lent zest. No prompter lurked in the corner to check the ardour of creation, cries from the wings of *à scenario* being sufficient to recall the rules of art to wandering ebullitions of genius. A back-curtain with a street scene on one side, and an interior on the other, real rocks brought from the park, moonlight passed through coloured glass, and rain represented by long knotted cords passed through holes that had been drilled in long planks and agitated violently, were sufficient stimulus for the fertile imaginations of actors and audience. The Tales of Hoffman, very popular at Nohant, themes from Molière and Don Juan, with musical accompaniment if necessary, furnished the slight web upon which an embroidery of heroic combats, bodily chastisements, contradictions, threats, and the kind of *repartie* relished in the popular theatres of Italy ever since the days of Plautus, lent to the Nohant performances that sprightliness and freedom and rapidity of movement, which, in the drama as in republics, makes for collective success.

During the political agitations of 1848 the cast was dispersed and the Nohant theatre closed, but when George Sand's dream of proletarian banquets ended in disillusion, theatricals were again invoked to drive away black thoughts. But the *personnel* of Nohant had suffered many changes, and the possibilities of production were limited by the slimness of the troupe. Augustine's marriage had deprived them of their young Première, and Maurice, who unwillingly filled this *rôle*, was disposed to absent himself more frequently from home, preferring to live artistically, expensively, and amusingly on his mother's earnings, in an apartment in Paris and returning to Nohant only for the summer months. Mme. Sand wisely gave him his head, denied herself new gowns, curtailed her charities, and consoled herself with the devotion of the lovable little Lambert and the congenial Victor Borie, to whom was soon added another of Maurice's friends, Alexandre Manceau, an engraver on steel, and son of the head gardener of the Luxembourg ; and also from time to time, Edward Cadol, who wanted to write for the stage. Manceau played elderly parts to perfection, the Duvernets produced a successor for Augustine in the person of a young relative who visited them frequently, and, especially in the summer, when the guests at the château overflowed into the little pavilion at the end of the garden, the household continued to be *enragé* for theatricals. Mme. Sand perceived that she no longer had children, but dramatic artists, about her ; her ink-well was no longer a fountain of romance but a cistern of plays, and every corner was occupied with some one learning a *rôle* or manufacturing a costume. The Commedia dell' Arte developed into a real theatre, with a stage, a drop-curtain, foot-lights, flies and scenery, and an auditorium the size of a pocket handkerchief ; and horrified peasants, passing the lonely château in the wee, small hours on their way home from the tavern at Corlay, heard shouts, pistol shots, thunder, drums and ghostly music issuing as from a haunted castle, and fled in terror like the tipsy school-master of Sleepy Hollow.

Not content with his exploits with living actors, Maurice, in his Paris apartment, evolved a marionette theatre with which to entertain his friends, and soon transferred it to

Nohant, where it was installed in the same hall as the big theatre, and rendered the household quite independent in the matter of actors. Thus the repertoire was limited only by the creative imagination of the family. The Théâtre de Guignole was now the *Salle de Prieuré*, so named from the little vaulted room, once dignified by the name of the Salle des Archives, annexed to the billiard room, and now entirely devoted to theatrical purposes. Those good old characters, Columbine, Pierrot, Polchinello, Arlequin, Capitan, Cassandra, reappeared under slightly different names, but with dispositions and habits quite unchanged, their droll little faces, which were painted on wood by Maurice's deft fingers, trained in the studio of Delacroix for this unexpected use, adapting themselves quite easily to the kind of humour enjoyed at Nohant. The hand that had guided the pen of Lélia was now busy manufacturing miniature costumes, whose historical and artistic details were carefully prepared by the versatile Maurice. Manceau, the serviceable and devoted, whose supreme virtue was his infinite capacity for taking pains, devoted his time and eyesight to giving form to the elaborate conceptions of Maurice's exuberant fancy. Scene-setting, lighting effects, mechanical devices of all sorts, were some of the problems studied and solved in the Nohant workshop. As Maurice's marionettes were not the sophisticated kind that are operated by wires, but the more intimate and impressionable variety that responds to the action of the thumb and two fingers, it was only possible for a number represented by twice two hands to be actively engaged on the stage at one time. This shortcoming was overcome by his inexhaustible ingenuity, and it became possible for whole armies and mobs to participate in the action by the simple device of suspending by-standers and up-stage puppets on screws in overhead slats, by means of minute spirals attached to their shoulders, a slight jar bestowed upon the slat being sufficient to convey an astonishing air of life and realism to the assembled hosts.

Thus a new direction was given to dramatic talent at Nohant, and a pleasing variety was introduced in the human performances by a combination of the real and puppet stage. A Christmas play, based on Hoffman's *Tale of the Toymaker*,

for example, could suddenly be diversified by the opening of a box of puppets under the Christmas tree, and the audience had only to shift their chairs and face to the right in order to enjoy a marionette interlude on the smaller stage, without the least injury to the effect of life. For Maurice's puppets could fight duels, carry a torch, dress, undress or make a bed in public ; ships sailed, enchanted palaces disappeared—in short, all the miracles now performed at Hollywood at enormous expense for an amazed world, were enacted within the narrow compass of the Salle de Prieuré for the price of a little paint, a bit of wire, a few scraps of silk and velvet.

The result was astounding. Everybody at Nohant became an incipient dramatist. Edward Cadol, Manceau, Maurice, even Lambert, aspired to create plays that would be worthy of the Paris stage. George Sand, the novelist, became a successful playwright, and her plays, tried out at the Salle de Prieuré, often with actors from Paris in the cast and managers of Paris theatres in the audience, were applauded on the stage of the Odéon, the Gymnase, and the Comédie Française.

* * * * *

From the time she was a little girl and, while visiting the Duvernets, in order to prepare for First Communion, was taken by them to the performance of some itinerant comedians at La Châtre, George Sand always had palpitations and thrills when seated in front of a curtain about to rise upon a play. She adored dramas that made her cry and liked to be wild over the characters. The blood of a play-actor ran in her veins and the lives and psychology of stage-people had always intrigued her. " One cannot judge them like ordinary people," she said once to her young friend, Henri Amic, who also had felt the dramatic urge ; " they never go out in the daylight, they have the foot-lights, not the sun." She cultivated their society in her Mansarde on Quai Malaquais, and frequently put them in her novels, and as every actor aspires to play Hamlet, so she always longed to make her little experiment in writing for the stage. Only the dull necessity of bread-winning had delayed her risking of her coin on the magic spot.

Her first attempt had been a prodigious failure, "une consternation lamentable," the critics said. It was in the days

of the little Chopin, and the auspices had been good. Buloz, who was director of the Comédie Française just then, had obligingly given her play a chance at that theatre, and she had an excellent cast, including her beloved Marie Dorval for the leading part. The play, which had been written before the cooling off of her intimacy with Liszt and Mme. d'Agoult, was entitled *Cosima*, in honour of their second daughter, and the musician and his Arabella graced the opening performance, and occupied Mme. Sand's box. But the actual experience, with its revelations of the delays and dissensions that can spoil the best production, and of the mercenary necessities of paid critics and *claques* that can make the worst a success, cooled her enthusiasm for the career of a dramatist. Many of her enemies—for she had enemies among the defenders of virtue or the enviers of her laurels—seized the opportunity to make a public remonstrance against the supposed subversive and heretical tendencies of her novels. Oddly enough the play which had been named for the future wife of Richard Wagner had for its theme a variation on that favourite problem of George Sand's—the self-sacrificing husband who is ready to cede his wife to her lover, provided he is worthy of her. The action was slight, the conversations long and stupid. The hisses and howls of an unappreciative audience drowned the voices of the actors, and all the noble passages that the author and her friends had particularly admired were greeted with loud bursts of laughter. Mme. Dorval lost her head, the actors forget their lines, and Buloz was perspiring with rage and chagrin.

Only George Sand remained calm, even gay. It is a very small thing to have to endure ridicule for an honest conviction! It is, on the contrary, a cause for pride to feel that you are the only real MAN in the audience. Although never supposing that it was a fine piece, she knew it to be sincere, and the indecencies were in the minds of the people who misinterpreted it. Her friends believed in her, and she had at least the success of esteem. Nevertheless, Heinrich Heine was inclined to think that the crown of thorns had wounded the head accustomed only to laurels.

Ten years after this fiasco, *François le Champi*, a dramatisa-

tion of her novel of that name, was put on at the Odéon by her actor-manager friend, Bocage, and George Sand was successfully launched as a dramatist.

Enthusiasm for the people begins at home, and her republican principles had already pointed the way to the creation of a new literature, that of the pastoral romance, out of the customs and beliefs and simple annals of the Berrichon peasants about her. With the steadying of her affections on a maternal basis, mismated wives and romantic super-women had almost vanished from her novels ; but she was still a long way from the so-called realistic style of seeing and depicting. Her peasants bore no resemblance to the degraded brutes with which M. Zola has made us acquainted. They were loyal, virtuous and superior people, as romantic peasants should be, and their little idyls were narrated with the simplicity of a child, and in a charming language purporting to be peasant dialect but composed and idealised by the graceful touch of the artist. George Sand simply poured the good wholesome wine of the country into her old romantic amphora, in place of the sparkling champagne of the 1830 vintage, and once more conquered the world with it. Bocage, just made Director of the Odéon and looking for something that *he* could conquer the world with, bethought himself of his friend George's new and popular *genre*, and determined to give the public a novel sensation ; he would put on the *Champi* (foundling) as a pastoral comedy ! Once the idea conceived, he lost no time in calling upon Mme. Sand in her apartment near the Odéon with a roll of manuscript under his arm.

It was early, and in his eagerness he had completely forgotten the nocturnal habits of the lady. " Madame is still sleeping," said the vigilant little watchdog, Martine : " She does not rise until noon." It was then ten o'clock. Bocage decided to remain on the ground ; he knew where she kept her cigarettes. When Mme. Sand at last appeared the cigarette box was almost empty.

" My dear friend, I have come to ask you for a play for the Odéon."

" Impossible ! I am only a novelist ; I have had no success in writing for the theatre."

" You will write *François le Champi* for me."

" François ! You can't make a play out of such a simple thing ! "

" It is very easy."

" Why don't you do it yourself, then ? "

" It is done." And he unrolled his manuscript. It was a scenario. His fingers and his tongue fairly flew and her great eyes became larger and brighter. Here an entry, there an exit ; cut out this and expand that ; open the play at the point where the youthful Champi returns to find his adopted mother a widow, and thus avoid the unpleasant suggestion of incest in the book, where the development of the adopted foundling into a lover is a trifle *risqué* from the point of view of a sensitive public, and the piece is made ! All that remained was for her to write it.

George Sand felt her buried dramatic instincts rising to the challenge. She consecrated four long, intense nights to the task, and as Bocage had said, it was done. She sent for him and he read it to her in his rich, dramatic impassioned tones, and the delicious freshness of fields and woods, the sweet breath of pastures and farmyards floated through her windows overlooking the Luxembourg gardens. It sang like a melody of the springtime. Bocage seized her in his arms and tears were shed. " You have saved my life ! " he exclaimed. And the rehearsals began.

François le Champi opened its run at the Odéon on the 2nd of May, 1847, only a few weeks after the death of Chopin. It had a splendid reception, but its author was not present at the *première ;* her heart had wounds of various kinds just then that she was nursing in the solitude of Nohant. A few critics uttered witticisms about Nausica washing linen at the town pump, and Calypso milking cows, and insinuated that the Champi reeked of Jean Jacques ; but the public liked to see classic shepherds masquerading as Berrichon peasants, and wept copiously over the sad scenes, which was always the romantic test of success. The " fatal Byronic beauty " and " slim Apollo " figure of the much admired Bocage, slightly damaged by age, but none the less telling, made a hit of one of the secondary parts, and George Sand looked to him thereafter

as her pilot on the perilous seas of play-producing. The Nohant theatre became a school of drama, and upon its stage many plays for the Porte-Saint-Martin and the Gaieté, as well as the Odéon and the Comédie Française, were tried out and perfected. Actors came to the Nohant stage from the Gymnase, where George Sand for some time enjoyed high prestige with Montigny, the director, and there were three o'clock suppers at La Châtre after the performances, with champagne frappé, dancing, and plenty of *verve*, to the renewed scandal of the decent La Châtre bourgeois.

She was now in the very heart of the stage " set." How many " sets " she had touched since she lived in an attic with Jules Sandeau and wrote articles for *Figaro !* Her atelier in rue Racine, close to the Odéon, assumed the air and manners of the ante-room of a theatrical impresario. Directors, actors, a sprinkling of dramatic critics and playwrights—everybody talking drama. The enchanting young Mme. Baretta whom she had assisted to make her *début* in one of her plays ; Mlle. Thuillier, frail, ethereal and serious ; Mme. Arnauld-Plessier, intense, passionate, who was passing through a tempestuous love-affair with Prince Bonaparte ; Bocage, a rabid republican, rolling out his sentences in the dramatic style of the old tragedians ; Berton, aristocratic and elegant in appearance, but fated to end his days in an insane asylum ; Clerh, Ribès, Rouvière—these were the people who occupied her thoughts and her interests now ; good, warm-hearted people ; a little difficult at times, but none of them belonged to that abhorred class that Mme. Sand dismissed with the epithet, " positive minds."

Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who was an Englishwoman, and therefore quite conceivably one of the " positive minds," but who had written charming verses about George Sand, made a pilgrimage to No. 3 rue Racine and was scandalised at the *entourage* of the " large brained woman and large-hearted man " to whom she had addressed two sonnets. " The abomination of desolation ! " she called it. Ill-bred men on their knees adoring her between puffs of cigarette smoke and spittings of tobacco juice ; a mixture of strolling comedians and out-at-the-elbow radicals of the " very lowest kind,"

wriggling at her feet, calling her sublime, "tutoying" and embracing her. "And she so different in her melancholy aloofness, apologising with calm and gentle disdain for the bad manners of her guests; 'caprices of friendship,' she said." "A noble woman, walking in the mud," Mrs. Browning concluded.

Owing to his having insisted on distributing free seats to working-men Bocage went under a temporary cloud at the Odéon, but there were plenty of other theatres ready for the dramatic works of George Sand, and during the next six years she had eleven plays produced in Paris, sometimes two or three running at the same time. But alas! she soon discovered how steep the path and how bitter the bread of even the successful playwright, and the pleasure of experiment in the home theatre was scarcely compensation for the ennui of Paris productions; waiting for a theatre, postponements, intrigues, rivalries, illnesses of actors, changes and interpolations demanded in her manuscript, public caprice, and surprising diminutions in the author's share of the spoils. And forever the dread of the censor hanging over her head. All this was a fearful strain on a cheerful optimist who had hitherto known only the ever open pages of a journal that simply paid and printed and was done with it. Nevertheless some of her plays, like the *Mariage de Victorine*, *Mauprat*, *Maître Favilla*, acquired a fame and an assurance of permanence that could not but be gratifying, and the performance of *Claudie* at the Porte-Saint-Martin, was one of the theatrical events of 1850.

Claudie was a delightful pastoral of the kind the theatre-going public have continued to adore, up to the reign of the musical comedy; with hay-fields, golden sunlight, an atmosphere of brooks and humming bees, picturesque, bright, clean peasants with red cheeks and graceful ankles, and a real haycart with a yoke of oxen brought right on the stage. There had been great excitement at Nohant over furnishing the required local colour, especially in the matter of Berrichon songs.

"Send me two things of which I am in pressing need," Mme. Sand wrote frantically to her friend, Charles Duvernet. "A

turkey, and Müller ! " (Müller was a young political refugee with musical gifts, whom Duvernet was harbouring temporarily). " A turkey, the best you have, alive or dead ! Müller ! I need him to put in shape Père Rémy's song for *Claudie*, and other Berrichon airs ; Bocage waits. Quick, Müller ! Quick the turkey ! "

The airs had been caught in the chimney, so to speak. A mason, who was putting in a new furnace, having been overheard, at an opportune moment, singing with the *vrai Berrichon chic* an ideal air for the harvesters' chorus in *Claudie*, was pounced upon, conveyed to the salon, and set upon one of the best Louis Seize chairs while Mme. Sand, perspiring with excitement, transcribed the air as best she could, and rewarded the singer with meat and drink. Singing became popular with the workmen on the Nohant furnace thereafter, from the boss who squalled Donizetti, to the helper who mimicked the melody of the pig. Meanwhile, Müller and the turkey arrived and finished the work, and a package of songs with drawings of yokes, carts and costumes in the Berrichon manner, was dispatched to Bocage. They added greatly to the local colour, and to the emotional success of Bocage's impersonation of Claudie's blind old father, Père Rémy ; a sort of Millet peasant, bowed under the pathos of a laborious life drawing to a close amid the twilight loneliness of solemn fields. The harvesters crowded about the haycart festooned with flowers, that brought in the last sheaves from the fields, and as Père Rémy, according to the old custom, tried to lift the " gerbe " (the last sheaf laid upon the load) and the lusty peasants sang the closing bars of the harvest song, " Gerbaude, Sainte Gerbaude," to a falling curtain, the audience burst into tears as one man. *Claudie* would make a stone weep. All agreed that it was destined for a long and successful run.

Never, wrote Gustave Planche, who was still able to appreciate Lélia's art, had dramatic author handled an equivocal theme so boldly, and only admiration was due the frankness with which she overthrew moral standards and hurled the apotheosis of the unmarried mother in the face of the astonished public, with her demand, not for pity, but for esteem of the erring Claudie ! The audience drew a long breath of relief when the

child-mother was at last safely and worthily betrothed to the finest young swain among them all, and in the general rejoicing no one noticed the dangerous republican sentiments of the harvester's song :

" A la sueur de ton visage
Tu gagneras ta pauvre vie.
Après travail et longue usage,
Voiçi la mort qui te convie."

No one but the censor ! But the old Père Rémy had rendered the peasant's lot of hard labour, and death at the end of the road, with his pillow the sheaf of grain for which he had toiled all his life, entirely too vivid and pathetic for presentation in an imperial theatre. *Claudie* was cut off at its forty-eighth performance to crowded houses, and its expected receipts were thereby halved. After Mme. Sand had paid her debts with her share, she was as poor as ever and the studio she had planned to build for Maurice at the top of her house had to wait for another theatre and another play. Meanwhile, the rising popularity of the *Comédie de Mœurs* inaugurated by Alexandre Dumas' *Dame aux Camélias*, foreshadowed the waning of the pastoral novelty. It remained now for the successful playwright to transfer his sentiment and pathos to the drawing room.

* * * * *

A curious circumstance had made Alexandre Dumas, *fils*, the " fils " of Mme. George Sand.

Two years after the death of Chopin this young man chanced to be in a little border town of Silesia, where diversions were few, and to have a package of old letters thrust into his hand by an unromantic acquaintance, attached to an exporting firm in that town. The letters thus offered for the guest's entertainment had been left with friends by Chopin's sister when she was returning to Poland with her dead brother's effects. She feared that they would be seized by the police at the border. Young Dumas spent the night with these letters—faded, yellow, but carefully labelled and wrapped—and made no scruple of replacing the curiosity of the heartless police by his own admiring sympathy, for they were of course, the letters of George Sand. While handling reverently these fragile relics that the

delicate fingers of the great musician had once touched with tenderness and joy, he derived from their perusal an impression at once gay and intimate, a vivid picture of the relations of two illustrious people. He almost contemplated committing murder upon his indifferent friend who had not even the curiosity to read such important documents, rather than leave them behind in that remote spot where they might be desecrated by eyes less reverent than his own. He substituted for such extreme measures the safer precaution of copying them all. Then, on reflection, becoming convinced that the letters clearly belonged to Mme. Sand herself, he notified her respectfully of his romantic discovery through his father, who had just accepted the dedication of one of her plays at the Gaieté. He assured her of the tenderness and respect with which these tender secrets has been ravished and offered to bring them back to her (with the copies). " The heart which found itself so indiscreetly the confidant of your own was already yours long ago, and its admiration had already attained the age and stature of the greatest and most mature of devotions."

Thus it was that the world was deprived of the privilege of dissecting the intimate details of this great romance which afforded a delicious feast to a young dramatist in a remote Silesian town.

George Sand burned the letters, and most of Chopin's as well ; there was a question of Solange in them, she said, and she preferred to shield the weakness of her own offspring from future publicity. But she adopted the discreet depository of these secrets as her " son," and he fitted so pleasantly into her life and interests at Nohant that he had a room set apart for him and came there often for rest, recreation and even for work. He liked a daily dip in the Indre as well as she did, and he was so excited over a marionette performance that he could not sleep ; and, besides these unmistakable signs of filial sympathy, he was simple, frank and apparently unconscious of possessing the unusual talents she at once detected. It was rare, she said, to find so sane a mind, in these latter days of orgies of intellect, and she predicted that his genius would bury all the rest of his generation, including his father. As for his

character, she had not made up her mind, and indeed she was not concerned with it.

It was during one of his visits to Nohant that he proposed the dramatisation of her novel *Villemer*. This story, which dealt with marquises and dukes and hinged upon the love of two brothers for their mother's modest and virtuous companion, offered possibilities for Mme. Sand to enter the new field of the *Comédie de Mœurs*, in which Dumas was making a name for himself. Peasants played a minor *rôle* in *Villemer*, although the characters all displayed those exceptional virtues of thought and conduct to which Mme. Sand's people were incorrigibly disposed ; even that dissipated Don Juan, the duc d'Aléria, vying with his sombre and conscientious brother in his determination to renounce and forget the young woman who held both their hearts in the hollow of her hand. " I am too *bête*," George protested, distrustful of her success with drawing-room scenes. Dumas sketched the first act for her, but when she brought him her continuation, she was not satisfied.

" I don't know about the last act," she said, " but the first two are bad."

" The last two are bad, and the others are impossible," said this implacable school-master.

" The trouble with you is that you follow your novel too closely. You need to cultivate a sense of dramatic construction. Your themes are good and that has made your plays succeed so far ; but arrangement and dialogue are your weak points ; try again ! "

" I am too *bête*," she repeated dismally.

" I know the refrain of that song, having heard it several times before, but you must keep trying. See ! thus and thus ! "

And when *Villemer* proved a tremendous triumph, Dumas gallantly refused to share the laurels.

It was a long time before the Latin Quarter forgot the wild excitement over the première of *Le Marquis de Villemer*. Dramatic critics dated their souvenirs from it, as people refer back to some outstanding phenomenon like the year of the great fire or the summer it snowed in July. The Odéon was completely sold out a week in advance, almost an unheard-of thing. All the cast—the majestic Berton père, who had been lent by the Vaudeville for the part of the spendthrift Duke, Ribès, the

consumptive and temperamental youth so perfectly fitted to play the frail, pensive Marquis, and the touching, poetical Mlle. Thuillier, as the poor but honest and beautiful Caroline, —all were in a fever of excitement, and everyone at the theatre, from the cast to the orchestra, and the old scrub-woman who called her " my treasure," petted and spoiled George Sand when she came up for the rehearsals, with her devoted shadow, Alexandre Manceau always in attendance. A magnificent new set of drawing-room scenery, rich but desperately ugly, had been ordered for the occasion, and George, in spite of a tooth-ache, and an epidemic of influenza that nearly prostrated her and completely knocked out the delicate young Manceau, caught the contagion of excitement and announced the good omens in daily bulletins to Maurice.

When the great day arrived, a continuous procession of students who were unable to get seats, called in groups of four at her rooms on rue Racine near the theatre, with their visiting cards in their hats, soliciting places. Hundreds were turned away from the theatre at the last moment. Throughout the performance the vast square of the Odéon, which was brilliantly illuminated, was filled by a compact mass of students, who comforted themselves for being unable to get in by yelling deliriously whenever, between the acts, benevolent people from the audience came out to report the progress and success of the play. " Vive Mme. Sand ! Vive Villemer ! " from a thousand lusty throats ; and " A bas les cléricaux ! " Passers-by halted their carriages to inquire if there had been a revolution.

Those were the days when young people had allegiances and hatreds, when they felt noisily, with their lungs and their hats, over something besides football and a boat-race. The students of the Quartier were a delightfully spontaneous set, they knew the power of enthusiasm. No cause was lost if they espoused it ; no ideal could live if they decided to damn it. Jesuits and clericals were particularly unpopular with them always, and the mere fact that a recent novel of Mme. Sand's, *Mlle. La Quintinie*, had been condemned for discussing too freely the doctrines of the Roman Church, was sufficient to rally the students to a man as her staunch admirers. They seized the occasion while waiting for further tidings of the play to serenade

the Catholic Club, which was near, with some slightly indecorous songs, and had the exquisite satisfaction of attracting the attention of the police. But they were back on the square in time to greet the great author with frantic shrieks when she came out of the theatre, and to struggle to unharness her horses in order to draw her home in her carriage themselves. Never in the history of man had there been such a demonstration over an Odéon play.

Inside the theatre, enthusiasm was more decorous but no less overwhelming. Even the presence of the Emperor and Empress, which generally caused a frost, could not chill the warmth of *Villemer's* reception. Great waves of excitement rolled over the house, from Prince Bonaparte and Princess Mathilde in their box, and the smart gentlemen in dress suits who filled the front rows, to the crowded galleries ; thunders of applause and shouts of " bravo " and " bis " greeted every well-turned phrase and emotional scene, until the actors were abashed, not quite understanding what it was all about. And it is possible that no one understood ! It was one of those occasions when the air is charged with electricity and everyone is *simpatico* and on the alert, and the enthusiasm was like a contagion. " I have seen many premières," wrote Sarcey, one of the Popes of dramatic critics, " but none that could be compared to the success of *Villemer*, for deep emotion and tempestuous joy."

George Sand was the only one who remained externally calm, and inscrutable as ever ; Manceau beside her was out of his mind with joy. In the foyer, where people crowded about her—strangers, critics and celebrities with congratulations and praise—she remained always the same, impassive, quiet, almost somnolent. But inwardly she was as excited as anyone, and no honour or tribute was lost upon her. The following day began the visits—callers, flowers, letters, an endless stream ; and the judicious Manceau was always at hand to smooth the way, admitting favoured guests into the great dimly-lighted atelier where she sat, lost in thought and smoke ; filling up awkward gaps in the conversation, offering comments and explanations like a proud showman and ever watchful that nothing was lacking for her comfort.

" He is an admirably contrived machine for an author," observed Théo Gautier ; " she can't sit down in a room without pens, blue ink, ruled letter paper, matches, and Turkish tobacco rising up before her ! "

The *Marquis de Villemer* ran for two hundred nights at the Odéon, and then went to the Comédie Française. It continued to draw crowded houses and unprecedented receipts. Mme. Sand was able to pay all her bills—for there were always bills—and to permit herself a luxury almost indispensable for one who has business with Paris theatres,—a little home near Paris. Dumas presented her for membership in the Dramatic Author's Club.

Every author touches his high-water mark once. George Sand touched hers on the twenty-ninth of February, 1864, after she had lived, loved and worked nearly fifty years.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GOLDEN WOOD

" Un vaste et beau jardin bien planté, bien uni, bien noble à l'ancienne mode . . . un peu froid d'aspect, quoique situé à l'abri des coups de vent. C'est encore assez grand pour qu'on y essaie une longue promenade, mais on aperçoit les limites au bout des belles allées droites, et il n'y a point là de sentiers sinueux pour s'égarer." [1]

Isadora.

ONCE more a calm, devoted affection had come to bless the golden autumn of life, and to absorb the inexhaustible fountains of George Sand's maternal tenderness. The ruling passion of the gentle, humble soul of young Manceau was Service ; and Mme. Sand had arrived at the age where there was ample opportunity for the display of that virtue. He had begun by worshipping and serving Maurice who treated him condescendingly as a sort of inferior and factotum. Having merged his existence in the house of Sand, Manceau then extended his idolatry to Maurice's mother, and was rewarded with a devotion that the son regarded with the same contempt he had bestowed upon the little Chopin ; for like Chopin, Manceau had already begun to droop under incipient consumption and was an object of tender care and protection. So they protected each other, and George for the first time knew the full rapture of a nature as eager to give as it was contented to receive.

Manceau knew, anticipated and shared all her whims and fads, and ministered unto them. She loved flowers. He loved them too, and sought for new varieties and specimens, and assisted her in analysing and mounting them. She had a

[1] " A vast and beautiful garden, very level, very noble in the old style—its aspect a little cold, although sheltered from the wind. It is yet large enough for one to attempt a long promenade in it, but one sees its limits, at the end of the beautiful, straight allies, and there are no winding paths to go astray in."—*Isadora.*

passion for butterflies and minerals ; Manceau never went out without a butterfly net, or a hammer ; it was his persevering pursuit of a certain variety of butterfly that gained him his pet-name of " Amyntas." Whatever honours might await him in his own art, that of an engraver in which he manifested decided talents, he preferred to employ his skilful fingers in the manufacture of marionettes, in labelling and classifying minerals, mounting butterflies, attending to Mme. Sand's voluminous correspondence and financial accounts. To another faithful slave, Émile Aucante, whom she had sheltered in days of political adversity, was delegated the handling of her literary interests in Paris. Occasionally Manceau put his *burin* at her service to engrave Maurice's illustrations of her books or to copy her splendid portrait by Couture. No one ever saw her alone now. On her walks, drives, visits, at the theatre or in her own drawing-room, at home or abroad, she was always attended by the quiet, faithful Manceau. He knew her wants and requirements better than she herself did. These unobtrustive and apparently pliant personalities often conceal the will of a tyrant.

Manceau discovered that she was restless at Nohant. She had *le pied qui remue*, and with age her eagerness to see and to know all increased. But she scattered the large income from her books and plays with such a lavish hand, had so many pensioners and charities to support, without counting Maurice, who was a constant source of outlay, that she rarely could find extra francs for her own gratification. At Nohant there was an army of hangers-on, peasants, and servants who were peasants too, guests, fêtes, upkeep, no luxury, but the easy abundance that eats up an income before it is earned. So George Sand, the most popular novelist and playwright of her day, could not afford to travel ; she must stay at home and earn the living of her family. But she had always said when she returned from a trip in search of new scenes, " There is nothing lovelier than Berry ; why leave it ? " Manceau decided that what Mme. Sand needed was not travel but *absence*. And it was then that they discovered on the banks of the Creuse not twelve leagues from Nohant, a new and romantic country, and the picturesque village of Gargilesse, a nest built at the bottom of a funnel of

high cliffs, full of the sound of falling streams ; a few rude red-brown stone houses, built without mortar, clustering about a little fifteenth century church with a dim, damp crypt and faint old frescoes stained with lovely tints of coppery green moss, and a sleeping stone knight who had lost his nose. Above the village were woods and fields full of varieties of flowers and insects that belong to the milder regions of the far south. " A *petite Suisse !* What a country to botanise in ! What a paradise for the entomologist ! What a spot to lose oneself in ! "

Out of his modest savings Manceau bought for her one of the little stone cottages that stood in rows of three, facing each other across little sunny squares, all exactly alike, with a narrow stone platform reached by a long steep flight of rough stone steps, running across the second floor. A real peasant's cottage, with two small rooms, a wild cherry tree, and a bit of a brook at the side. Just big enough for two, with a congenial extra, Dumas, Plauchut or Maurice, when he chose to come. Here, he said, is Absence ; Absence from care, from people, from mail, from that celebrated person called George Sand.

Winter or summer, whenever the impulse seized her, Mme. Sand could start off in her open carriage, with old Sylvain on the front seat, and the click of her two little white ponies' hoofs and the jingling of the bells on their collars for music, to spend a night or a fortnight at " the villa Algira," as they had grandiloquently baptised their Gargilesse cottage. All along the road they followed were ruins of old feudal castles, some stark and desolate on the summit of jagged peaks, some crumbling in a hollow among sturdy pines and chestnuts ; Châteaubrun, Motte-Feuilly, Briantes, Sarzay—each with a story to tell her as she passed, and all to live again, transfigured for the readers of the *Presse* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in *Les Beaux Messieurs du Bois-Doré* or *La Famille de Germandre*.

The climate of Gargilesse, as soft as that of the Riviera ; the hot barren plain they named "' the Sahara," where new and rare leptodères danced in the sun ; the swift, dark blue Creuse foaming and curving under the steep high banks on which the village huddled ; all these became as familiar to George Sand's readers as the Claudies and Fadettes and enchanted ponds in the " Veillées " of the old Chanvreur of Nohant. Gargilesse

proved to be an Algiers for climate, a Switzerland for Alpinists, an Italy for painters ; and its waters were declared to possess healing qualities for affections of the *spleen* that Aix or Pau might have envied.

> " Horace had his Anio,
> George Sand has her Gargilesse,"

sang the old Father Hugo when he read her *Promenades Autour de mon Village*.

And in the peace of her " Villa Algira " George felt her imagination recreated and inspired afresh. Thirteen novels and two plays, together with numerous short sketches and new *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, were the harvest of the seven years of intermittent " absences " at Gargilesse. It was apparent that new harmonies were sweeping over the lyre. Mineralogy and Entomology—*Laure ; or a Voyage in a Crystal*—took the place of the unhappy-wife theme, and personified butterflies and flowers bloomed upon the ashes of the romantic young ladies and aspiring proletarians her readers knew so well. Fantastic creations that smelled of museums and fossils peopled the fields where once the simple, honest, stolid peasants had toiled and loved, and the pursuit of botany gave zest to languid existence and healed broken hearts. All the problems of life melted away in a golden mist of optimism, in which the study and love of the great out-door world was the dominating note.

The success of *Villemer* broke up the idyl of Gargilesse. A writer for the stage needed to be close to Paris. Yet Paris was the grave of genius. How reconcile these conflicting conditions ? Again Manceau came to the rescue. He found at Palaiseau, a small settlement among the rolling meadows and rich market gardens of the Seine-et-Oise, the perfect combination of a rural and peaceful environment with convenient railway connection with Paris ; a wonderful branch to perch upon and hide in, and an ideal spot for the practice of that simplicity and economy which Mme. Sand was persuaded her budget demanded. Manceau had found a tiny *villino* there, the last house in the village, solitary, remote, and yet easy of access. They put together her balance from *Villemer* and his little profits from a one-act play the Odéon had staged for a short time, and they bought the *villino*, with its pretty garden

snugly hidden behind a high cement wall. They bought furniture on the instalment plan and Mme. Sand notified her Berry friends that as her theatrical interests necessitated her remaining near Paris for the present, she would live at Palaiseau, where she could get quantities of delicious fruits and vegetables, keep one servant, do without a carriage, and save ninety per cent. of what Nohant had cost her. Nohant would be closed and left with a caretaker unless Maurice, who seemed to like wandering, could arrange to run it without her assistance. If not, he was welcome to perch on her branch too whenever he chose. She suggested that he dispose of some of their Delacroix pictures which, since the painter's death, were bringing large prices, in order to add to his resources if he found her removal too embarrassing.

Maurice had once more interfered in the disposal of his mother's devotions. Although not prepared to give her himself the attentions rendered by the humble Manceau, he was not pleased to be left suddenly to shift for himself, pushed out of the nest as it were, and forced to prove whether he really had wings or only creepers. He closed Nohant, not without a protest, and went to Guillery.

The Berrichons were aghast. Nohant closed? The *Bonne Dame* deserting her dear Indre and her peasants? The *spirituel* house-parties and marionette plays over? Speculation was rife and no one found the solution. A delegation of working-men waited on her with a touching and eulogistic farewell address, hailing her as the good goddess of poetry, who had honoured and consoled and idealised the working-man in town and country, and expressing the hope that her absence would not be permanent. The newspapers reported that she had made a fortune from *Villemer* and was building a magnificent villa. George received it all placidly and kept her own counsel.

For the poor devoted Manceau was a doomed youth. A serious lung trouble, already suspected at Nohant, had made rapid progress after his severe attack of influenza at the time *Villemer* was rehearsing, and the little home at Palaiseau, under pretence of being a convenient perch from which to flit to Paris, was really a sanatorium where she could nurse the poor

consumptive without endangering the health of others she loved. Shut up with her invalid behind the high walls of the little villa, taking him for strolls in the wide sunny fields, reading with him through long solitary evenings, George Sand bravely and tenderly awaited the end of her last attachment. Dumas, Borie, Aucante—sometimes Maurice, relenting—came from time to time to cheer her lonely vigils. Each time they came Manceau's gentle face was a little thinner and whiter and his cavernous grey eyes more sadly resigned. About a year after they had bought Palaiseau he died.

" I double the cape of bitterness. I enter unknown the sea of isolation," she said.

The generous Manceau had left his share of Palaiseau to Maurice. Mme. Sand made a short stay at Nohant, but she was not yet ready to take up the burden of her life there again. She returned to her solitude and to the sad memories of this odd little perch. The lamp had gone out, but it was always there ; the image remained and seemed always trying to speak to her. A young soul that should have survived her, an affection on which she had counted for her declining years, gone so quickly ! All heart, all devotion ! The twelve years she had passed with him from morning to night had conclusively proved to her the grandeur of simple human nature. This modest, commonplace son of the people had given her what she had sought in vain among poets and artists and brilliant orators and great thinkers, what not even her own son could give her—a child-like devotion that loves without thought of a return, that understands, accepts and is grateful.

* * * * *

But under all the excitement and activity of this strenuous life Mme. Sand's slim elastic figure, her firm strong features, her clear olive skin, began to yield insensibly to the dilapidations of time. Not a grey hair yet in those abundant glossy locks, but a sagging of the chin, a thickening and broadening of outlines, and the significant little wrinkles that come with the approach of age, not unbecoming to faces that have thought and felt. And then her first severe illness, that left her weak and listless, warned her that it was time to rest. Maurice found a pretty cottage at Tamaris, on a cliff that looked across

the bay, where she sat under lovely umbrella pines and botanised and never touched a pen. Upon this sea of forgetfulness broke a letter from Buloz. Might he try to get her the Gobert prize of twenty thousand francs from the Académie Française? George Sand was once more a contributor to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and Buloz liked to have his people honoured. "All right, old man, get me the prize!" The money would be welcome after her long illness and doctors' bills.

Buloz approached some of Mme. Sand's friends in the Academy. There had been much less worthy recipients of Academy honours. Louise Colet, for example, whose insipid verses on the *Musée de Versailles* had taken a prize because there were fifty-nine worse poems offered. "A prize for George Sand!" cried Victor Cousin; "She is above such silly honours. She is the first writer of her age!"

The wheels of influence were set in motion, none the less, but the first writer of her age was unfortunately in bad standing with some of the Immortals; not for her immoral stories, this time, for the world moves fast and moral standards were already outstripping *Indiana;* but for the unpardonable sin of bad taste.

It all went back to the buried Venetian romance and Alfred's love letters. After Musset's death his brother Paul had asked her to return his letters and there were negotiations for an exchange of documents with the expectation of burning them. But when, by a complication of circumstances, Mme. Sand found herself in possession of both sets of letters, she saw no reason why the meddlesome brother should concern himself with their ultimate fate. She wisely recognised that, viewed disinterestedly, they were priceless as literature, pure and simple, and moreover, she remembered opportunely, that while dead lips could never refute certain slanderous charges of cruelty and desertion that were being circulated against her by some of Alfred's more recent lady friends, the testimony of the letters might clear her. She decided upon publication. But first she consulted the Père Sainte-Beuve, who united to knowledge of the extenuating circumstances great tact and an impeccable *savoir faire.* He advised against publication for the

present. This was disappointing, although she yielded graciously. Instead she appointed Émile Aucante and Dumas her literary executors, with full power to publish as much as they saw fit, and contented herself with writing a pendent to *La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle* entitled *Elle et Lui*.

Elle et Lui was a gold-mine for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, but there was a widespread sentiment that Lélia had taken an unfair advantage in postponing the narrative of her side of that old romance until her Knight was already dust. Sainte-Beuve reproached her for having portrayed her heroine as almost too faultless and saintly, while many felt that the hero, who represented de Musset, had been slandered. Paul de Musset at once retaliated by *Lui et Elle* and the lady whose poem on the *Musée de Versailles* had been crowned by the Academy, on the strength of a brief and almost forgotten affair of her own with the late poet, added her little obbligato in a novel called *Lui*. " If she survives this," said Alfred's " dernière marraine," Mme. De Joubert, " she must be invulnerable ! " Echo took up the refrain and all the possible changes were rung on the pronouns by native and foreign talent, and Paul de Musset cleansed his bosom by writing his brother's biography and pouring into it some perilous stuff that he claimed to have received from Alfred as a sort of death-bed confession. George took his book into the country with her and used it to press flowers in, as she found no time to read it. But in the preface to her next novel she protested against Paul's unbrotherly revelations. " Filth thrown upon a tomb ! " she said ; " Art blushes at it and criticism repudiates it."

Literature has never ceased to profit by this controversy, but the effect upon the committee of the Academy was very sad, and the Gobert prize was awarded to Thiers, although Sainte-Beuve and, very handsomely, Mérimée also, voted for the lady. Sandeau discreetly remained at home that day.

The Emperor Napoleon III. was distressed at the turn affairs had taken, and indicated to Mme. Sand through a mutual friend that he would deem it an honour to be permitted to confer the money equivalent of the Gobert prize upon her as a rebuke to the poor taste of the Academicians. His offer was

politely declined. "If I were sick or infirm," she said, "I would ask the Emperor's assistance as I have often invoked that of the Empress for the poor and unfortunate." But as she had never expected to get this prize, and saw no reason why she should, she continued to live in her happy world of flowers and dreams where no one ever heard of the Academy or of literary squabbles.

* * * * *

George Sand never could do anything by halves. She did not belong to that school of authors who completely eliminated their personal opinions and interests from their literary work. Artistic creation for her was not an impersonal presentation of facts and forms; the poet is ME! Whether she loved a poet or a musician or the people, whether she was absorbed in a new religion, a new friend or a new science, or in the evolution of a marionette theatre, it all went straight into her novels and her plays. It coloured her view of art and history and human character. Her old admirers wept to see her later novels turned into educational treatises on natural history, with a sugar-coating of love-story. Even her plays bore evidence of the fantastic incidents and farcical buffoonery that was relished on the Nohant stage, and those who had long ago taken the *Lettres d'un Voyageur* as their Bible, had now to solace themselves with the exquisite natural descriptions that continued to transfigure even the most aggressively scientific fantasies and divergations. The corruption of the Roman Church and the dangerous power of clericalism in the French Government was a subject that stirred her profoundly, and her new novel *Daniella*, which was expected to radiate the charm of the Eternal City, after her sojourn in Frascati, was given over to rambles among the flora of the Alban hills, interspersed with protests against the filth and dilapidations of priest-ridden Rome and reflections on the hardness and severity of its much-vaunted campagna.

One day she presented Duquesnel, the Director of the Odéon, with a new play which she considered "BELLE." Maurice did not care for the subject, and it was quite possible that it was not worth two sous, but it was a personal expression spontaneously written and inspired by a sort of "interior

radiance." This was *Mlle. La Quintinie*, composed on the theme of a novel written some time before, which owing to its uncomplimentary sentiments regarding the catholic clergy, had raised a storm of protest and evoked a deluge of letters for and against her bold handling of this delicate theme, especially on the part of the Catholics, who were scandalised at the character attributed to an erotic and cunning priest, conspicuous in the story. The Odéon accepted the play joyfully and proceeded to rehearse it but the censor felt differently ; many changes and cuts would have to be made in a drama which turned upon the refusal of a young woman to marry the man she loved, on account of her abhorrence of the Roman Church to which he belonged, and which declared husbands to be the only safe confessors for young wives, because confession to a priest endangers the souls and amounts to divorce before marriage. Mme. Sand declined to soften her expressions, and Duquesnel, with his eye on the annual subsidy which had not yet been voted, appealed to a higher power, M. Jules Simon, Minister of Beaux Arts. M. Simon found the situation awkward. To forbid the presentation of a play by so eminent and popular an author as George Sand was to stir up a hornet's nest among the students and Republicans. To pass it would endanger his ministerial office which was already tottering. He shifted the responsibility to the Military Governor of Paris (this was the period of the Franco-Prussian War). The Military Governor was a man of quick decisions. " What is the matter with the play ? " It was about a priest who made love to a young lady.

" Indeed ! Well, I will draw my sabre across the young lady and she will give us no further trouble."

" This is laughable," cried George Sand, when she heard of the tempest she had raised. " I have no desire to put sticks into the wheels of the car of State, which is already rolling over a volcano ! Drop the matter for the moment." But Jules Simon was still uneasy, and feared to offend the susceptibilities of the temperamental student body. He had a tactful *tête-à-tête* with the director of the Odéon. " The play is all right. It is a masterpiece, and all that ; its morals are of the highest ; but, you understand——." Duquesnel understood ! Unforeseen obstacles began to present themselves. The chief actor was

temporarily deranged ; the young Première had a run of fever. Someone else's play had the right of priority. Finally he suggested to Mme. Sand that the time seemed ripe for a revival of her very popular drama, *Mauprat*. She smiled sadly and assented. But Jules was a gallant gentleman, and he was a little worried lest his conduct had been wanting in chivalry toward a venerated and venerable lady. He proposed to give her a Decoration in compensation for the fate of *Mlle. La Quintinie*. George Sand never accepted compromises. " Can you picture me with a bunch of red ribbon on my stomach ? " she answered.

Worn out with the everlasting struggle with managers who wanted to change her plays and censors who wanted to cut them, critics who advised more pepper and less salt and wanted to force her into paths that were not her own, and a public who accused her of ridiculing the honest bourgeois and enthroning the bohemian and the prostitute, George Sand withdrew more and more from active participation in the theatrical battles, leaving the task of dramatising her novels to friends who were more sympathetic than she with what the public wanted. This gave her more time to devote to gardening and domestic life, but she still liked to go to Paris for the rehearsals and for an occasional tussle with some defiant young star, such as an idle and wilful young person named Sarah Bernhardt, with much ability and a golden voice, who was appearing in the first *rôle* of her play *L'Autre*, at the Comédie. It was exhausting, but stimulating, all the same, this standing around in the draughty wings of a theatre for hours at a stretch while the Indre was throwing off its icy mantle and the Berry meadows were unfolding the first wild flowers of the spring ! The habits of a life-time are strong, and she would creep back to her little nest in rue Gay-Lussac, where she had her final perch, sleep thirty-six hours at a stretch, and awake to start another play or another novel, " just because she was used to it." It kept her in touch with humans, after all, and with the teeming life of youthful aspiration and endeavour which was the vital thing for her.

One day they put her bust by Carrier-Belleuse in the foyer of the Odéon. After it had been there several months, she

invited her young friend, Henri Amic, who was staying with her in Paris, to walk over to the theatre with her and take a look at it. " I have never seen it," she said. " I dislike to look at it when people are about." Young Amic was not pleased with the bust when they arrived. " The lace headdress is not effective, I admit, but the work on it is charming," she protested. " But it does not resemble you in the least! If I were you, I would not allow it to remain here."

" Ah, well, the likeness might be better, I suppose ; but that is no reason for insulting the artist by withdrawing it. You must remember that this bust represents someone's hard work and sincere endeavour."

Why worry about failures, opposition, disappointments? The joy of creation, the pursuit of an ideal is so much bigger and more important than its realisation!

CHAPTER XVII

SINFONIA DOMESTICA

"Aujourd'hui il-y-a bien un vieux ermite qui se promène à travers mes romans, mais . . . il n'est pas un philosophe bien profond, car c'est moi. Je ne sais pas s'il condonait et gourmandisait la jeunesse de son temps, si elle était jeune et malheureuse. Mais, chose bien étrange, cette jeunesse nouvelle rit de tout ; elle exorcise la doute au nom de raison ; elle ne comprend rien aux souffrances morales que les vieux ont traversées ; elle s'en moque un peu ; et un des plus naïfs, un des plus jeunes de cette époque de refroidissement, c'est encore le vieux ermite qui la contemple avec surprise." [1]

Nouvelles Lettres d'un Voyageur.

JULIETTE LAMBER, the writer, and her husband, Edmond Adam, a political leader, whose father owned a strong anti-imperialist paper, were invited to Nohant for Mme. Sand's birthday, and Juliette, who was an intense and excitable young person, always in a state of exaltation over something—her husband, or her garden or her villa at Golfe Juan,—was enjoying thrills and raptures of anticipation. She had made Mme. Sand her idol long before she had the good fortune to become her "big daughter," or even to know her. It had been, perhaps her unhappy marriage to an "odious bully," who retaliated when she tried to get a divorce by claiming his right to the royalties on her books, that had led her to the feet of the defender of women's independence. But she had been obliged to stand and wait for a time before she was admitted to the treasures of Mme. Sand's confidence, for unfortunately, she

[1] "To-day there undoubtedly is an old hermit rambling through my romances, but . . . he is not a very profound philosopher, for he is myself. I do not know whether he condoned and spoiled the youth of his time if they were young and unhappy, but, strangely enough this new youth laughs at everything ; it exorcises doubt in the name of reason ; it has no understanding of the moral sufferings that its elders have passed through ; it ridicules them a little ; and one of the most naïve, one of the most youthful of this age of coldness, is precisely this old hermit who contemplates it with surprise."—*New Letters of a Traveller.*

was intimate with Mme. d'Agoult—a serious barrier to any harmony in their *rapports*, Mme. Sand gave her to understand. The day came at last when Juliette Lamber decided that the suspicious and critical disposition of Mme. d'Agoult no longer permitted a continuance of their old relation, and thereupon Mme. Sand had said, " Come ! " Juliette hastened with beating heart to the rue Gay-Lussac where she found her idol engaged, as usual, in smoking a cigarette, and looking very small in the big arm-chair from which she did not rise to receive her tremulous guest. The customary silence descended upon them both ; Juliette too agitated to be able to make conversation ; Mme. Sand calm and pre-occupied, carefully rolling a cigarette, with her elbows on the table, and absent-mindedly staring at her attractive young visitor. The situation was too much of a strain on the over-wrought young lady ; she burst into tears. Whereat Mme. Sand threw away her cigarette, came from behind the table and opened her arms wide. Juliette fell into them and henceforth they were mother and daughter ; Mme. Sand called her " Bow-Wow," consented to visit her at Golfe Juan, and wrote her a charming *Lettre d'un Voyageur*, all about Botany, for Juliette adored flowers and had a famous garden at her Riviera villa. As for Edmond Adam, whom Juliette married after the opportune death of the bullying husband, Mme. Sand declared that he was everything she most loved and esteemed in the bearded sex.

But this was the first visit the Adams had paid to the celebrated château of Nohant, acquaintance with which was the seal upon every genuine intimacy with the châtelaine ; the only place where she was really herself.

" Bring good shoes if you want to walk," she had written ; " for the country is hard on the feet. And bring your new novel to read to us. We live in the most complete calm, never even opening a paper, and we plunge into the Indre every day, and in Botany and other innocent and healthy drolleries."

" The Indre ! " That was like saying " the Tiber " or " the Rhine," for an admirer of the novels of George Sand. The Indre, which you could step across in summer, but which in winter was as boisterous as the Rhone at Lyons ! Where there was a " pocket bath-tub " hidden away under the pro-

tecting, overhanging branches. Where the water was so swift and clear and tranquil, and where there were hillocks of sand on which to sit and smoke your cigar while you watched the butterflies. The visitors strained their eyes for a first view of this far-famed stream, and made the mistake of welcoming it far too soon in the several beguiling little rivulets that curve through the flat meadows on their way to join it. It was a trifle dampening to one's imaginative impulses to be accurately informed as to all these details by a talkative American gentleman, interested, in a literary way, in the career of Christopher Columbus, but resident in France, who was also going to Nohant and who let it at once be understood that this was not *his* first visit.

At the railway station at Châteauroux they were hailed by the postboy, with the appropriate name of Lajeunesse, who always took charge of Mme. Sand's commissions and her bi-weekly packages of cigarettes from Paris. When visitors were expected at Nohant, Lajeunesse was asked to take charge of them and given careful instructions of their number and station ; but if they were very distinguished people and Sylvain the coachman was sent for them, he merely escorted them to Mme. Sand's carriage. They climbed into the high brake with leather curtains, drawn by two white horses, and rattled along a monotonous level road, among fields of grain which stretched away to the horizon with no other break than rows of dwarfed and pollarded trees, whose tufted tops assumed all sorts of grotesque shapes as they filed past. To the visitors' vivid imagination, every peasant they passed was a Champi or a Père Rémy or a Petite Fadette. At the old tavern of Corlay, on the brow of a long hill, the coachman suddenly halted and threw down the reins over the seat in order to have both hands free to point out the beauties of the famous " Vallée Noire " which they were now beholding. Not black at all, but a brilliant blue green with rolling meadows and yellowing grain and little hollows dark with clustering trees, and rough old whitish cart tracks meandering off without any apparent boundary or destination. Way down at the foot of the hill lay Nohant, completely hidden among tall chestnut trees. They passed a high grey wall with two ancient round towers,

relics of the original feudal mansion, and had a glimpse of a long shady lane beside them, leading to a green where peasants were drinking in the slanting sunset light at long tables under the trees, and of a little brown church, snuggled down behind them. And then with a great flourish the driver hauled in his steeds before a low vine-covered pavilion, close to the road.

A shady alley of trees edged the garden and led to the terrace on which all the lower windows of the long, low house opened, flanked by two gracefully drooping beeches, and two magnificent pines. The wide glass doors stood hospitably open into the dining-room, and beyond there was a glimpse of a stone-paved hall and an oval bull's-eye window above a stone staircase winding up in a half-circle past a niche, in which stood Clésinger's bust of the châtelaine.

The honours of hostess were performed by a shy but friendly young creature with an odd little short face and near-sighted spectacles, and an air of being over-awed by the beauty and elegance of the effusive Juliette Adam. This was Maurice's wife, Lena, daughter of the Italian artist, Calamatta, who had made the famous engraving of Delacroix' portrait of Mme. Sand, and had been one of her *protégés* and valued friends for many years. Readers of the *Maîtres Mosaïstes* were already acquainted with Calamatta, who was portrayed there as a complete and inflexible idealist, who preferred poverty to the sacrifice of his dreams. Lena had not entered literature, except as all Mme. Sand's letters to her friends celebrated her virtues and her accomplishments as a daughter-in-law and a wife who left nothing to be desired. Mme. Sand had every reason to be satisfied with Lena, for she had picked her out herself, after Maurice had lingered a bachelor for years, seeking little or badly, his mother thought, and hesitating between a woman older than himself or a very young person who promised well for a *première* in the Théâtre de Guignole. She had been overjoyed when he suddenly settled on this young girl of Calamatta's whom they had always known and who had lived much of her life in Paris. " The desire of my heart fulfilled ! " she wrote her friends, " with all of the sympathies and none of the idosyncrasies of the artist." Practical, efficient, a marvellous housekeeper, it proved—one of those people who have the

(*Bibliothèque Nationale*)

GEORGE SAND

After a photograph by Richeberg

faculty of being in all places at once ; in the kitchen superintending the preparation of some special dish, in the drawing-room entertaining the village curé (Mme. Sand, notwithstanding her heresies, was very popular with the local clergy, whose poor-box was heavily subsidised by her charities) in the nursery brushing the children's curls, in the attic hunting for something Maurice needed for his theatre ; sewing, reading Darwin and the newspapers furiously, poring over fossils like an old professor, then dropping on a sofa to cry over a novel. In short, one of those people who are able to lose themselves in others, without surrendering an atom of their mental independence. Just one more proof of the genius of George Sand.

For the position was no sinecure ; Lena had married Maurice and his mother too.

" Trust in us ; trust in him, and believe in happiness," Mme. Sand had written her when they were about to be affianced. " We two will have but one end, and one thought—to cherish and pet you. We love your father so tenderly ; he has been one of our best friends for thirty years. When Maurice saw you, who resemble him so much, he felt a sympathy for you as for no other. I need a daughter and he whose cause I pleaded with your father is worthy to take charge of your happiness. Come to us and be blessed."

The marriage had been celebrated very quietly at Nohant—a civil marriage ; for, Mme. Sand explained, like all those who had desired the union of Italy and the triumph of Victor Emmanuel, the Calamattas and their friends were excommunicated. It was with a secret desire to make Maurice more dependent on his young wife than upon her, that Mme. Sand had so mysteriously shifted the responsibility of Nohant upon her son at the time of her flitting to Palaiseau with Manceau. Not until after a severe illness in Paris, " a momentary inability to digest something," as she called it airily, when Alexandre Dumas had taken her down to Nohant himself, did she finally decide that the time had come to take up her residence permanently with her children, now that Lena was firmly in the saddle as housekeeper, and Maurice was settling down into a farmer with scientific tastes. But Lena must never be over-

shadowed by her distinguished mother-in-law, she was resolved ; on the contrary she was to be the buffer between her and society ; and thus it was that this modest little person was put forward as hostess when guests for Mme. Sand arrived.

* * * * *

Dinner at Nohant was not a function honoured by swallow-tails or décolleté. How could it be, in a dining-room adorned with an aquarium of stickleback and tench, and a cage of squirrels, and where the service was performed by a Berrichon maid in a stiff white coif and fichu, and a ruddy peasant in sabots and a long blue smock embroidered with white ? Mme. Sand dressed simply always, her only concession to self-adornment being a weakness for certain bizarre jewellery, especially if it could be bestowed in her dark, elaborately waved hair, which she very properly treated as a woman's crown of beauty—a net of sequins, a rosary of carved beads with bracelets to match, or at least a few field flowers or ivy leaves with a small corsage bouquet to carry out the design. She had even been seen with her collection of coins arranged coquettishly among her braids. She had a weakness for odd and curious rings, not because she was vain of her pretty hands, but as a part of her mineralogical cult. She rarely wore them but kept them in her grandmother's jewel casket, with the pearl cross she had worn in Charpentier's portrait for the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and the ruby ring that Mme. Dupin had put in her tiny baby fist, as a token of relenting prejudice against a small squirming bundle which the outlawed Sophie Delaborde had somehow tricked this *grande dame* into taking into her arms.

The far-famed gaiety of Nohant, as it revealed itself at dinner, was chiefly furnished by the guests, for Mme. Sand, much as she enjoyed gaiety in others, was not gay herself, and rarely spoke. Lena was shy and Maurice not expansive with strangers unless one of his numerous fads was under discussion. Upon the young men who were at home at Nohant, and Mme. Sand's nephews or Planet's son, Maxime, devolved the serious duty of being gay, and even they sometimes came in for the châtelaine's charge that the younger generation had forgotten

how to play. " I would like to introduce courses in gaiety in the schools," she often said. There was nothing like it for pure hygiene, and it was a sign of a good conscience too. She feared serious people as Cæsar feared a lean man.

The visitors soon discovered that the essence of at least one brand of gaiety relished at Nohant consisted in twisting and mispronouncing words, in the use of nicknames for persons and things, and in absurd allusions to unintelligible events or imaginary people. There were many localisms—Sandisms, more properly—that constantly figured in the conversation, which left the stranger stranded, with a sensation of being very much out of the game. And if someone was sent out of the room on an errand, he did well to be on his guard against tricks. Mme. Adam's name was speedily twisted to " Juillette " ; one of the guests whose name was Plauchut was referred to as " Plauchemar," and the Adams finally grasped that the " Château de la Plume " or the " Château à Chimère " was Nohant. This was all right after you had caught the style, but to a serious-minded dignified stranger like Edmond Adam, who had a constitutional objection to perpetual chaff and practical jokes, and had come to Nohant obsessed with an inward dread of finding hair-brushes in his bed when he retired, the strain of keeping up was fatiguing. He found no solace in the society of the genial Plauchut either, with his soft batiste shirt, and dyed beard and air of a Brazillian hidalgo, for he was obliged to listen to a lengthy account of his famous shipwreck off the Cape Verde Islands, on Christmas eve, when his life was saved by his sudden inspiration to show some letters from Mme. Sand which were in his wallet, to a Portuguese official who admired her works. " This coincidence," Plauchut concluded " not only gained me my passage back to England on a passing schooner, and thence to France, but it has made me an inmate, member indeed, of the family." It had become an established custom, it appeared, that Plauchut should always celebrate the anniversary of his shipwreck at Nohant. " There is a hole in our Eden when his fat paunch is not here to fill it," said Mme. Sand. Everyone listened to the thrilling narrative as breathlessly as if it was being told for the first time, for Plauchut evidently stood in well with the young folks, but

Edmond Adam was sceptical and disposed to treat the episode as a Nohant joke. " A salon shipwreck," he said with a broad smile.

After dinner the family and guests congregated in the drawing-room, where the central and conspicuous feature was an immense oval table, under a Venetian glass chandelier, about which they all seated themselves. A big ugly table, made out of a cherry tree in the garden by the village carpenter, Pierre Bonnin, Mme. Sand liked to explain, who had a special gift for making articles of awkward and inconvenient form. If not good-looking, it was solid and honest, and had been the nucleus of the evening life, of pleasure and unity in the great salon for many years. " It is the harmony and soul of the household," she said, when some of the family proposed replacing it by several smaller ones scattered about the room ; " The day this table is upstairs in the attic and I am underground, there will be a great change in this house. Think of the people who have gathered about it ; think of all the things that have littered it and consecrated it! Water colours, botanical specimens, entomological preparations, music copies ; manuscript, caricatures, embroidery silks, bits of velvet and chiffon for the marionettes, dominoes, cards." Indeed, she loved the old table of Pierre Bonnin so much that she wrote one of her books about it and perpetuated in it the things she had talked about as they sat around it. Before the children went to bed, there was a noisy game called *cache-tarabuste* into which Mme. Sand entered with the same gusto as into the games at Melun, when she was Mme. Dudevant, and made everybody laugh by pretending to do and say stupid things. Then all quieted down, and the uses of the famous table were illustrated. The châtelaine became absorbed in " Patience," Lena produced her sewing, and Maurice his water colours, while a variety of games and puzzles were taken from the drawer for the diversion of the guests. Fortunately for those who did not care for games Mme. Sand, while announcing a ban on serious discussions around the table, always enjoyed having someone read aloud, and slyly slung a book at Plauchut when he fell asleep and snored during the reading. Music followed, as the evening was too damp to sit on the terrace, and Mme. Sand herself played for

them some of her favourite Gluck and Mozart airs—not on Chopin's little Pleyel piano, which had never been touched since he left, but on her own ; while the pastel of the florid Marshal Saxe smiled at the bright splashes of Delacroix's " Giaour " and " Centaur " on the opposite wall, and the nightingales' accompaniment floated in through the long open windows.

They all retired early in order to be ready for the birthday celebration on the morrow. " Call me if you want me ; the house is yours ! " was Mme. Sand's good night, and the departing feet of the young men scrunched the wet paths as they sought their sleeping quarters in the pavilion. Maurice stayed behind. He had a night's work ahead of him ; the decoration of the house for the morrow and the making of wreaths and festoons from the armfuls of flowers that had been gathered by the peasants in the fields that afternoon.

The birthday did not really begin until the family, dressed in their best for the occasion, had finished breakfast, and Mme. Sand, who still kept to her habits of all-night work and her cup of rich chocolate and cream in her room, descended to join them. Maurice read a poetical greeting prepared for the day, and she kissed him on both cheeks and cried " How adorably stupid you are ! " Then it was the turn of the servants and peasants, Pierre the gardener, Marie the cook, who had held sway in the Nohant kitchen for thirty years, Thomas the milkman, Sylvain the coachman, and a host of others, some bringing offerings of game and poultry, lined up in the stone-paved hall to receive a hearty salute on each cheek, a time-honoured Berrichon custom. When the floral decorations had been duly admired, Mme. Sand led the way to the garden for her regular morning call on all the flowers to see what new buds had unfolded during the night. Here were plants, wild and cultivated, brought from her travels about France and in Italy, or sent her by her friends. Not to be cut, these flowers. " Respect the plants " was the motto of her garden ! The heavy perfume of musk pervaded it, her favourite scent, and the delicate fragrance of tall pink spikenard, which she loved because it reminded her of her grandmother ; Persian lilac and a wall covered with jasmine ; white clematis climbed to her

window. Wood and field flowers too, were there, now past their flowering time ; the leaves of wood anemones and tufts of hepaticas, and a curious little plant that opened its starry blossom in fine weather, and closed when rain was at hand. Here was an odd species of fuchsia, with a round red flower, given her by Delacroix. Every plant had a story or association, and the progress through the garden was a trip around the world. " There," she said, pointing to two Gallo-Romanic stone sarcophagi overgrown by moss, " you can see how one does not need to travel away from Berry in order to meet history face to face ! Those were dug up near our little old church of Vic, among vestiges of Roman buildings and skeletons of Merovingian kings. You would not believe that in that ugly little church, under three coats of whitewash, they discovered Roman frescoes of the eleventh century, and I got the Government to make it a National monument ! " Little crooked paths led off to a clump of cedars and lilacs hiding the " Petite Trianon,"—a miniature Switzerland, a doll's garden, which she had herself constructed on the site of her old " altar to Corambé," for the entertainment of her little granddaughter Jeanne, Solange's child, who had passed several happy intervals in her short and troubled life at Nohant, and was buried in the little family burial plot, on the side of the garden nearest the church. " My father lies there too," said Mme. Sand, with a half smile ; " his head in consecrated ground and his feet in his own land ! " The little Trianon looked very sad and dilapidated ; the grottoes and chalets were falling to pieces and the waterfall was dry ; the little cabin where Jeanne's wheelbarrow had been kept was never entered now—but the moss and ivy that wrapped it so mournfully, she said, were eternal.

As they passed through the gate at the end of the garden to the meadow path leading to the famous pocket bath-tub in the Indre, Juliette ventured to inquire about Solange, who had spent the past winter near Golfe Juan with a certain " Prince," supposed to be one of her lovers. Was she expected at Nohant this summer ? No, thank God ! Mme. Sand had a holy horror of her daughter, it seemed. " She can't be here a week without setting everyone on edge. Even the dogs and cocks

fight more when she is around." And since Maurice was married, she added, he had been unwilling to have Lena troubled by her presence. The Clésinger union had long ago come to grief and the sculptor had been able to get a divorce on account of his wife's irregularities. Her mother had tried to keep on good terms with her, but, she added with a sigh, " She is beyond my understanding. There is no need for me to write romances. My own child has far outdone any of my heroines in the fantastic life she leads. Much of the time I don't know where she is—flying around the country, first with a Count and then with a Prince. She claims to be homesick, but I always discourage her coming to this neighbourhood to live ; for she would create such a scandal ! " And could anyone imagine Solange contenting herself long with Nohant life ? Spending her evenings embroidering and playing the piano ? She needed theatres and races, a horse to ride in the Bois, a salon and a bizarre society of artists and modernists to keep her —not happy, for she was never that—but even occupied for a few months. But in spite of the unconventionality of her life and tastes, " Sol " was a very traditional person at heart. She had no religious convictions, " a thousand times more sceptical than I," said her mother, and mocked at everything serious or sacred ; yet she observed religious forms and had all the hypocrisy of genuflections and signs, and was insensible to the blessings of independence of customs and principles.

" She is her father's own daughter," Mme. Sand concluded, " even to her miserliness, which increases with years. She has never loved disinterestedly. She might have been a different woman if little Jeanne had lived ; she adored that child. But all these men she travels about with are intellectually and morally inferior creatures and her tolerance of them is purely mercenary. Count D'Orsay understood her, and might have saved her, old dandy and *roué* though he was, but she has no conception of noble, unselfish passion. I have shown the good sides, and the bad side too, of her character in *Mont Revêche* and in my play, *Le Démon du Foyer*, where the Count, if you remember, really might have saved her from the consequences of her hair-brained escapades and her egotistical

manias." Clearly, her mother's novels had been as injurious to Solange as to Eliza Ashurst!

"But Solange has literary ability, hasn't she? Girardin has a high opinion of her *esprit*, and has invited her to write for the *Courrier de Paris*. And she has the greatest admiration for everything you write."

"Ah, for me!" replied Mme. Sand, with a little gesture of deprecation; "She wants to continue all my characters in situations of her own devising and write 'Lettres d'un Voyageur Amoureux.' But for *esprit*, Solange has never lacked that. She can dazzle all *my* friends and her mother too, with her wit, and is really brilliant at times. She could have a very successful salon, if she would devote herself to it and choose her friends wisely. But she has no perseverance, because she is lazy and not in earnest. She begins so many things; she finishes nothing! Poetry, novels, plays, always asking my advice about them, but never following it."

"She used to see Sainte-Beuve a good deal, did she not?"

"Yes, and was so droll about him! She met him at Sandeau's installation at the Académie, and introduced herself to him, asking if she might consult him about a life of Marshal Saxe that she thought she was going to write. Of course, Sol can be fascinating when she chooses, and she quite captivated the little man. He invited her to come to see him in his little nest on rue Mont Parnasse, and she wrote me some very amusing letters about her visits; 'living a hermit's life with three women and an ugly little girl,' she said; 'receiving visitors in a white and gold Louis Quinze room, with a green wool coverlid on the uncurtained iron bed,' under which the *femme de chambre*, who was as beautiful as Mme. de Pompadour, had coquettishly hidden his nightshirt and cap. There was a cat in the corner nursing her kittens, and at nine you were offered a choice of a bowl of hot milk or a cup of tea with rum, but no one dared light a cigarette! He took quite a fancy to Sol, helped her about her life of Marshal Saxe, which, by the way, never got beyond the first chapter, and gave her, she said, a beautiful bouquet of roses from his garden and a little casket which Delphine Gay had given to him.

" Poor old Sainte-Beuve ! How he has mummified ! But no one ever said a good thing as well as he."

But they were at the river already, and the circle widened ; Mme. Sand's confidences ceased abruptly. It was only when with the " two or three " that she ever expanded.

" How simple and frank she is," her guests said to each other, when they re-entered their room to dress for the evening entertainment—which was the only full-dress occasion in Nohant social life. " She has nothing to hide, and none of the pettiness of her sex. Goodness and simplicity ; she is the incarnation of those two qualities."

" And so trustful ! How people have exploited her tenderness ! That is, after all, the secret of her weaknesses."

" Do you remember," asked Juliette Adam, " how pleased she was, that afternoon at Golfe Juan, when the Russian lady who was speaking of her influence on Russian thought and literature quoted what Tourguénieff had said of the beauty and purity of her characters arising from the beauty and purity of her own soul ? But when she was represented as a leader of her sex in free ideas of love and independence, she interrupted her almost angrily. ' I have never been an *advanced* woman ; I merely followed in the procession of my time, and defended the mission of my sex to rise above mere pleasure and caprice.'

" And there is where poor Solange has missed the clue to her mother's ideas ! All of which shows that they are too strong tonic for weak, self-centred people."

* * * * *

There was a flutter of excitement and an atmosphere of great festivity. Everyone down to " Lolo " and " Titi," Maurice's little girls, was in *décolleté* or fancy dress for supper. The house was plastered with posters announcing a gala performance in the marionette theatre ; " Alonzo Alonzi, the Bastard, or the Brigand of the Sierras," a melodrama, which had been composed by Maurice in twenty evenings. It was a miracle how so many people could be crowded into the little room in front of the marvellous drop curtain, appropriate to the play, and also the creation of the gifted Maurice. Balandard, the " Balieff " of the troupe, in a white waistcoat and choker, a dress suit and a tall hat, rakishly surmounting a high fore-

head and a large rosy wooden smile, acted as end-man and interpreter in a very nasal voice. " Balandard is a man of iron," it was explained to the guests. " But he is unfortunately superstitious ; he believes in dreams. You observe that the purity of his brow and delicacy of his nostrils correct his warlike and sensual appetites." The costumes were by G. and L. Sand, the make-ups by M. Sand, wigs by Lambert and the lighting by M. Sand. The plot of the play proved so unintelligible to the audience that the services of Balandard were indispensable. " We have Universal Suffrage here," explained Mme. Sand, who had suddenly become animated. " The audience is permitted to interrupt whenever it pleases and to demand explanations."

The newcomers to the Balandard Theatre soon discovered that the steady patrons were well acquainted with the idiosyncrasies and traits of all the troupe. Some of them had already been presented to the public by Mme. Sand in a charming story of a troop of Marionettes, *Pierre qui Roule*. Mme. Adam soon recognised some of the stars, and became acquainted with the qualities and susceptibilities of others, whose reaction upon the audience directed and developed the dialogue conducted by Maurice behind the scenes. There was Lucinda, for instance, whom she had already met in " Bellamare's troop " in the story, a great coquette and very pretty except that her nose was too long ; she could have gotten an engagement in Paris, her diction and her organ was so fine, had not she been too high priced ; and Anna, who read sentimental novels and fell in love with every man in the company in turn. Mlle. Eloa, the young première, was a sensitive creature with blue eyes and a Greek profile and real hair. You could never be sure when she was going to refuse to perform her *rôle*. Plauchut, it appeared, could never see Mlle. Olympia Mantouillet without vociferous manifestations of delight, while Planet courted Mlle. Ida. George Sand herself preferred the Doge of Venice, who was a bon-vivant and a great eater of peacock's eyes with Ethiopian sauce, or Gaspardo, the best fisherman of the Adriatic.

" I like Coq-le Bois best," declared Juliette Adam.

" Coq-le Bois despises everybody," said Lena. " He has

no sex ; but if you declare your passion he might possibly invite you to supper."

To the amazement of all, Coq-le Bois hurled the invitation across the footlights. Edmond Adam protested, and threatened action.

The guests began to see light in the jargon of Nohant humour and symbolism. It became clear, for instance, that " a Léandre," carelessly introduced in the description of someone's character, meant a " young fop," and the " Capitans " were soldiers, and to " Cassandrer " was to be an ill-natured shirk. The humour of the Marionette lay in his naïve and surprised expression, particularly after he had escaped from an impending danger, and pleased with his good fortune, appealed to the spectators for sympathy. He was by temperament talkative and deliberate, notwithstanding his quick gestures and perpetual state of astonishment, and was a very shrewd judge of human nature, but the broadness of his humour and the point of his local allusions would be entirely lost on the choice *esprit* of a Paris audience.

During the supper that followed the performance, Mme. Sand became eloquent over the superior advantages of a troop of actors whose voices blend harmoniously. It is not necessary to change your diapason, she insisted, in order to mimic different sexes and characters ; changes of intonation and enunciation are sufficient indications of individual mannerisms to differentiate a coquettish belle, a bloodthirsty brigand, and a sour old maid. Moreover, the dramatist who from evening to evening is able to vary his performance to suit the weather, the condition of the stock market, the latest political news or the composition of his audience, would have every reason to count upon a long run for his play. " Without the slightest doubt," she concluded, " the theatre of Nohant, painted, operated, carved, lighted, composed and recited by Maurice alone, offers an ensemble and a homogeneity which has not its match in the whole world. To-morrow you shall see the wardrobe and the studio."

* * * * *

The wardrobe of Balandard's theatre was a revelation of the cleverness of George Sand's fingers, which in the last twenty

years of her life had been able to turn out so many miniature costumes suited to the multitudinous *rôles* and periods and nationalities embraced by its voluminous repertoire. Maurice's atelier, a vast, cluttered and disorderly room at the top of the house, with an extensive view over valley and meadows, was a revelation and a symbol of Maurice's discursive mind and varied talents. Painting, sketches, caricatures, books on entomology and geology, collecting boxes, butterfly nets, minerals, microscopes, fossils, insects in jars, bottles of poison, branches of cocoons, mannikins, scenarios, parts of marionette costumes, carpenter's tools, treatises on agriculture, were piled on every table and chair, pinned on the walls, stacked in corners and strewn over the floor. There wasn't a spot to sit down, hardly one to stand. The Dupin dilletantism had been passed down from " old Francueil " and Maurice Dupin, to be concentrated and multiplied in George Sand's " wise digger of a son," who had discovered that since the world is so full of a number of things the wisest plan is to wear sabots and a peasant's smock and have a nibble at them all. Maurice had many avocations but no vocation, and was passing through life very pleasantly and profitably without it. He had known the joy of exhibiting at the Salon and of receiving a medal ; but he found equal joy in exhibiting at the Agricultural Fair and getting a prize. He had written and charmingly illustrated a scientific work on butterflies, and took equally keen satisfaction in writing and illustrating a history of the Italian Popular Theatre. He would " walk three leagues to find in the middle of an immense swamp a creature that could only be seen through a microscope," or pass hours analysing a butterfly's wing, and gave no less pains and thought to the invention of a device which made it possible to review a whole army of marionettes on Balandard's stage. He took a short trip to America on Prince Napoleon's yacht, and returned to write an account of his travels, in which he punctured the illusions of this " false democracy " which had left out fraternity in its proclamation of liberty and equality and remained in consequence at a still lower level of intelligence and heart than the old civilisations of the continent. He wrote and published several novels (" My brother does well," said Solange, " to do his writing during my

mother's lifetime!"), and he filled several albums with exquisite water-colour illustrations of all the Nohant actors, dressed for their different *rôles*. Into all these pursuits his mother entered with the heartiest sympathy and with great admiration of his talents. She agreed that it was his destiny to drink the Infinite, since it was his desire and his passion.

On the subject of Maurice's literary ability she was especially sensitive, treasuring and retailing every word of praise or interest expressed by her friends. A discussion of this delicate question happened to come up in the presence of Juliette and Edmond Adam. Maurice got quite angry because she insisted that his books were better than hers. He thought her silly to be so obstinate about it, and the argument threatened to become embarrassingly heated.

"Oh, well," she said at last, "it is not worth losing your temper about a matter that is of such small consequence. All right, then, I *have* more talent than you, since you will have it so! Now let's drop it." And she escorted her guests down to her own study to see her herbarium. The study adjoined her bedroom—a "Directoire" room, all carpeted and papered in deep blue, with grey medallions, in which little fauns and bacchantes pirouetted, and upholstered with crétonne of the same colour and design. Perfectly orderly, even coquettish, this bedroom, and pervaded with a faint perfume of musk. A *bergère*, several easy chairs, a sofa, where "Lolo" was occasionally allowed to sleep, as a great privilege, a half-moon Louis XVI. secretary, the gift of Chopin, in which she kept such treasures as the jewelled snuff-box of Marshal Saxe and the family miniatures, and a pretty marquetry table. The windows looked south on the parterre, and the branches of a large linden almost touched them. All about were the souvenirs of the past testifying to the strength of the links that bound her,—portraits of Mme. Dupin as a shepherdess, of Maurice Dupin in his uniform, family photographs; dried flowers under glass, among them bouquets of Alpine flowers, an annual birthday offering from her old admirer, Dessauer, now living at Ischls. "What is this?" asked one of the guests, leaning over a round piece of glass enshrining a morsel of blue and red paper of Chinese design. "That is a bit of the

wall-paper that was put on Chopin's room after he returned here from Majorca. I always liked that pattern, but the room has now been made over into a library."

" And there, over the little secretary," she added, " is my father's violin, the one that he was playing when I was born."

Ah, yes ; everyone who had read the *Histoire de Ma Vie* remembered the pretty story of how Aurore Dupin was " born amid roses and music " during a reunion of Delabordes and gay young officers, at which Sophie had danced to her husband's fiddling in a rose-coloured gown, and then slipped quietly and unobserved out of the room with her sister, to be speedily announced to the astonished company as the mother of a " fine little girl ! " Good auspices, those, for the little Aurore ! And the oracle had not lied. " I suppose there *have* been unhappy moments in my life, but I have forgotten them."

All coquetry vanished at the threshold of the study, which was almost filled by a large and clumsy desk, of the same home manufacture as the salon table. There were some shelves containing books and minerals, an armchair, more minerals on the desk, and some toys, a case of mounted butterflies, a few pictures of her friends and grandchildren, and that was all. The herbarium filled many large folios, and dated back to the days when she began her botanical studies with Deschartres, whose neat yellow labels had been placed there nearly seventy years before. " A collection of skeletons," she said, as she untied the worn strings, " but they give back life to me. When the weather is sad and gloomy, I open my herbarium and find it full of sun, the sun of the fields and waysides where these poor faded things were gathered, and each one recalls a happy day, or a dear friend. A cemetery, too, since most of the friends are dead ! A reliquary, rather, of the enchanted voyage of a soul through Nature."

" And I love the peasant names for the flowers," she added, pointing to the labels. " The scientific names are cold and meaningless. I could never learn them. See, how poetical these are—Shepherd's Thyme, Shepherd's Purse, Kitten's Foot, Balm, *Danse-Toujours !* "

The conversation passed to the peasant customs with which all her readers were familiar, and to the beautiful Berrichon

dialect which she thought so much more true and beautiful than the " *vraie parisienne*."

" In Paris they speak the ugliest and most incorrect tongue in France, all the creation of fantasy, chance, of the moment. In the provinces they conserve the traditions of our speech, and do not create many new words for the Academy to wrangle over. To be sure, it is not the vocabulary of *nuances* and insincere courtesies. Our Berrichon is the language of vehement sentiments, abounding in epithets and verbs that manufactured and expurgated languages do not allow. This makes it so expressive.

" But, alas, the beautiful Berrichon of my youth is a dead language, just as the *bourrée* is giving place to the stupid *Contredanses*, and *La Femme Barbe* is replacing the local songs that Chopin and Pauline Viardot used to admire so much. Our pretty winding paths where we used to lose our way, and rustic bridges, are giving place to fine broad roads. I can't make Berrichon romances any more, but I fall into line. Forward is the word ! "

" How far can we hold Universal Suffrage responsible for this falling away of your dear peasants from the good old customs ? " asked Edmond Adam mischievously.

" Oh, left to himself, the peasant is traditional, slow to understand, without enthusiasm, serious and sober in his affections. The vote has not changed him. Rather it is the railroads and schools and military service bringing them into contact with other ideas. I am doing my best to aid them ; since that is their destiny ! "

Visitors to Nohant never failed to see signs of Mme. Sand's quiet efforts to aid her people on their upward flight. They were well acquainted with little Marie Callaud, " Marie aux Poules," who had risen from the rank of dish-washer and feeder of chickens to an upper servant and actress in the Nohant Theatre, simply by the magic touch of thirty reading lessons of a half hour each from Mme. Sand, according to the celebrated Laffore method, applied successfully to a " perfectly clean intelligence." Many of them had also heard of Émile, the foundling, who had been found rolled up in a ragged cloak, thin and black, with little frightened mouse eyes, and put out as

a shepherd boy, but insisted on staying at Nohant. She had made him learn bugling, and he had become the bugler of the firemen, and had also acquired distinguished manners from observing the marionettes. Nor were they unacquainted with the carpenter's apprentice to whom she gave reading and music lessons in the intervals of her sewing and botanising and writing. " Education," she said, " establishes the only difference between people." But she did not explain how many generations of education was required for a gentleman. " I am a peasant myself," she liked to remind people ; " they were my only companions for years. I never treat them as servants or allow the word to be used ; they are *in charge* of my house or garden or stable."

The " tumultuous kindness " of the châtelaine of Nohant toward those who served her, and her inexhaustible bounty to the poor and sick, was the cause of considerable grumbling among her neighbours, who had no longer the sauce of scandal to add to their confidential gossip about Nohant. This blind and indiscreet impulse of kindness spoiled the peasants for miles around, it was said, and those she had aided most turned out worst. The high wages she paid, and her indulgence, had precipitated a " servant question " among the thrifty dames of La Châtre. They enjoyed retailing an incident of a guest at Nohant, not familiar with the Berrichon idiom, who having asked one of the maids to perform some service, was astonished at the reply, " I will indeed." " Indeed I hope so ! " was the sarcastic rejoinder.

All left-overs from the abundant table at the château were distributed to the poor in the deep porch of the church outside the gates, and to this was added money—fifty centimes for each child, and two francs for all the adults, whenever there was a fête or a birthday at the château. Mme. Sand paid from fifteen hundred to two thousand francs a year in doctor's bills for the peasants, and a constant supply of soup, wine, coffee and jellies went out to every cottage where there was illness. " The peasant who falls sick is lost," she said. " A year of poor harvest can wipe out all the savings ! " Mme. Sand had always been a demoralising member of the community ; it was indisputable ! If it wasn't one thing it was another, and it was

hard to say which wrought the most harm in Berry, her lovers or her charities.

An additional source of scandal had been the Protestant baptism of Maurice's children, together with a Protestant marriage some time after the civil ceremony which had united him to Lena. Mme. Sand had been keenly interested in this official renunciation of Catholicism, and it had been celebrated with *éclat*. She wanted to bear witness to the fact that they were not infidels, and that one can " have a religion without being under the yoke of priests and jesuits." Moreover, she desired that her grandchildren should be enlisted under some banner which would give them a sense of solidarity and fraternity in their religious opinions.

A *Baptême Spirituel*, she called it, when, after Aurore was four and Gabrielle two, they finally settled on a Protestant minister whose convictions seemed to be of a brand meriting their family allegiance, and His Imperial Highness Prince Napoleon, who, ever since he had heartily come to the assistance of Mme. Sand's efforts with his cousin for the freeing of the Republican prisoners, had been a close friend of Maurice and his mother, consented to act as godfather, Mme. Sand herself being godmother. The Prince presented his co-sponsor with a massive gold chain bracelet, in the fearful taste of the period, as a souvenir of the occasion, adorned with miniatures of the two little girls. The cannon of La Châtre was brought to reinforce the *salvés* of the little old culverin which had heralded the Republic at Nohant, and four bearded *sapeurs* in fur caps and leather aprons stood majestically behind the two children, who were seated in their little baby-chairs during the ceremony. To Tourguénieff, the Russian novelist, who was present on this occasion, she confided that she still declined to adhere personally to any cult ; the Protestants, indeed, showed signs of as great intolerance as that which had stained the Roman Church, and until she could find a religion that discarded hell, she personally could not renounce her independence. The *Baptême Spirituel* was merely a formal protest against Catholicism, and an acceptance of religious affiliation for the sake of her children and grandchildren.

For the sake of those grandchildren there were few con-

cessions she was not ready to make. " We are all on our knees before them ! " Beside their cradle she had found the guiding star of her old age. Aurore, especially, was her passion. From a baby she had looked at things with precocious attentiveness and manifested an amazing calmness in the operation of her little brain. Her little hands were marvels of dexterity. She was astonishingly intelligent and always good as an angel. In short, she was a most extraordinary child. George Sand taught the children herself, wrote fairy stories for them, read them stories from the Iliad and showed them how to " marry the flowers " so as to produce new varieties. It was a great event when " Titi " was able to tell a viper from an adder. She wrote her novels amid a litter of toys on her desk, with dolls and toys on her lap and shoulders, and the children tumbling and dancing about the sacred study, shaking castanets at her while she worked.

" Not quite so loud, my treasures," was her only rebuke.

Youth, wonderful mysterious youth, had come among them, from heaven that was their home ; and what was she, a mere singer of romances, to interfere with the free unfolding of their little souls ?

* * * * *

When the guests retired for the night, Edmond Adam reflected with satisfaction upon the agreeable visit that was drawing to a close, unclouded by any of the much vaunted practical jokes which he had feared.

" A remarkable woman, Mme. Sand ! The more you see her the more you are impressed with the sanity of her heart and imagination."

" To live with her would be to live in a world of beautiful dreams and ravishing Utopias ! " echoed his wife.

" No, she has solid good sense ; the heart of a man in the body of a woman." Juliette's rhapsodies had to be corrected and tamed. " How restful her companionship has been during these three days in this peaceful spot ! "

When the hour approached in which deep sleep is wont to fall upon weary and trustful man, a cock crew—prematurely, it seemed to the visitors.

" Where is that cock ? " murmured M. Adam drowsily. " It sounds very near ! "

The cock crew again.

" That sounded as if it were right here in the room," said his wife. " Do you suppose it is in the chimney ? "

M. Adam lighted a candle and approached the chimney—cautiously, lest the cock be alarmed and fly at him. At this juncture the Sand family and friends, who had been listening outside the door, arrived in their night-clothes to assist in the search. Another crow from the cock, and Edmond Adam, thoroughly aroused to the situation by this time, emitted a furious oath.

" That damned Maurice has put it in this wooden chest ! "

As he lifted the cover a squawking, flapping bird flew past him and landed unsteadily on the head of the bed. With another oath the outraged visitor seized the cock and put him out of the window, while the Sand delegation withdrew, crowing lustily.

Edmond Adam locked the door after them fiercely and extinguished the candle.

" I will never come here again," he muttered, " unless they agree to leave out this sort of thing ! "

Could a woman who found amusement in such puerile performances be seriously interested in great and high questions of literature and philosophy, or capable of genuine and deep feeling ?

" She believes in being gay on the surface and serious underneath," was the reply.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE OLD TROUBADOUR

" Penses-tu quelquefois au vieux troubadour de la pendule d'auberge, qui toujours chante et chantera le parfait amour ? "
Lettre à Flaubert.[1]

It was a serious event when the châtelaine of Nohant visited Paris for the rehearsal of a play or to attend the " Magny dinners." She always made a new hat for the occasion, and received many solemn instructions about toys and dresses for the grandchildren. Sometimes she took Aurore with her, which was an important occasion for them both. She still kept her modest " foothold " near the Luxembourg, and was saluted by all the shopkeepers as she passed along the street to the Gardens, where she was a familiar figure. It had its poetry still—her Luxembourg, with its picturesque old Florentine palace, and that could not be said of the banal " Paris-Sardanapolis " across the river. Of the city that spread beyond the Boulevarde des Italiens she had no consciousness ; it was sad enough to see how they were ruining the dear old Quartier Latin, opening vast avenues, light, airy, monumental, which swallowed up the groups of students who used to make the dark, narrow streets of 1830 re-echo with their laughter. There were no salons to speak of any more—not that she cared for them but they had their part in social life, and at least symbolised some sort of interest in art and literature and afforded a centre for the interchange of ideas. But in her tiny apartment, with its dark stuffy entrance on the first floor of No. 5, rue Gay-Lussac, shielded and ministered unto by her faithful old Martine, who worked at the Odéon at night and always spoke of her distinguished mistress as " Mme. de Cendre," she still preserved a breath of the old Paris of the days

[1] " Do you sometimes think of the old troubadour of the inn clock who always sings and always will sing of perfect love ? "—*Letter to Flaubert.*

of the Empire. Here, between the two wide windows that looked out upon the gardens, she had her work-table, and on the wall hung Delacroix's " Walpurgis Night," which he had left to her in his will. A few of the old friends still mingled with the new ones like Prince Napoleon, Charles Edmund, the editor of *La Presse*, Ernest Renan and Henri Amic—a very young student who preferred literature to law and whom she loved from the moment she received a letter from him modestly asking for her advice upon some of the problems of his life—or her less *élite* but equally welcome theatrical circle. When she had guests for dinner she took them to Magny's on rue Mazet.

The ravages of time have long ago carried away the celebrated restaurant ; Magny's has disappeared like the students of the Latin Quarter who used to entertain their successful friends there with baccanalian suppers, and like the big brave host who was equally interested in the culinary art and in literature. But the names of the select circle who gathered for the celebrated " dinners " in the stuffy little green salon on the first floor—Flaubert, Renan, Gautier, Goncourt, Sainte-Beuve, Sand—are still to be found on the backs of beautiful " complete sets " in the bookstalls under the Odéon arcades.

* * * * *

" I hear you have been visiting at Nohant," one of the de Goncourt brothers said to Théophile Gautier at a Magny dinner. " What is it like ? "

" Oh, just as Delacroix used to find it ; about as amusing as a convent of Moravian Brothers. Good food, but too much game and *poulet*. The trouble is you don't get a chance to enjoy it. You are hurried through your meals, so that the dish-washer, who is the young première in the theatrical performance, can get through her work in time to dress."

Gautier bent his Merovingian locks industriously over his plate, and curled over the table like a cosy comfortable cat.

" But it is supposed to be very gay at Nohant."

" That depends upon what you enjoy. I went to see Mme. Sand ! "

" Well, didn't you see her ? "

" Oh yes, I *saw* her, but I wanted to converse with her. I

didn't take that tiresome trip for the pleasure of Dumas' society, nor of Calamatta's either.

" I arrive at night ; I am deposited at the gate by a rattling, jouncing old diligence ; I am received by a man with a cart for my luggage, and a barking bull-dog. I am ushered into the dining-room where the table is already set for dinner. Mme. Sand is seen at the meal, but not heard. After dinner we sit in the salon where we are presented with a choice of games—dominoes, " cochonnet," " Sebastopol " ; Mme. Sand is greatly preoccupied making " dendrites " at the end of the table and never raises her eyes."

To make " dendrites," it appeared, you placed a lump of paint between two sheets of paper and squeezed it hard. Then you opened it and with a brush and box of colours proceeded to make the resulting blobs into charming flowers and figures and landscapes. Mme. Sand's young guests were kept busy preparing " dendrites " for her in advance.

" Breakfast at ten sharp," he continued. " The Sand enters like a somnambulist, when we have almost finished, and speaks to no one."

" Has been up all night, you know and probably not really awake yet," someone suggested. " She writes from midnight till daybreak. It is said that if she finishes a novel at 2 a.m. she immediately commences another."

" She is always in a dream," interrupted a young poet, who was a guest. " I went once to pay my respects to her after a cordial note she wrote me about one of my books which I had sent her. She offered me a cigar and sat smoking and staring at me calmly while I was getting redder and more embarrassed every minute. Finally, she threw away her cigar and sighed, and said, ' I contemplate you as an unknown country ! ' "

" After breakfast, we visited the garden," resumed Gautier, languidly fixing his eyeglass upon Renan, who was helping himself liberally to sweetmeats. " And then we played a game of bowls, which brightened her up a bit. And then we sat down to talk. Good ! I thought ; now we will get somewhere ! And I tried to get her started on Pronunciation. But nothing but pleasantry and chat ! All they are really interested in down there is mineralogy."

" Nothing about the relation of the sexes ? "

" Not a word ! They would put you out if you mentioned such a thing. Why, they are proper, virtuous people down at Nohant."

" And didn't you have any conversation with the Sand ? "

" Well, you see, I finally got desperate ; I took Alexander aside and I said : ' See, here, what is the matter ? Doesn't she like me ? '

" ' Of course she likes you, in fact, she adores you, but she is always so when there are people around. If you want a conversation with Mme. Sand you must get her by herself.'

" ' For God sake, tell me how to get her by herself,' I said. ' If I can't escape from this eternal chaff and mineralogy, I shall go home.' So then he gave her a hint, and she was exceedingly surprised. I finally got her started by saying that Rousseau was the worst writer in the French language, and that kept her awake for several hours."

" I believe she is coming here to-day with Flaubert," someone interposed, looking at the door. But Gautier was still under the spell of his Nohant experience.

" They have some strange customs down there that must be wholly Berrichon. One is the Silent Service. No bells ! There is a box in the hall with two compartments. One is for the out-going mail ; the other is for the house-mail. You write on a piece of paper what you are in need of—a comb, for example—and put it in the box, and the next day you have thirty combs to choose from."

A scraping of chairs ; Mme. Sand is entering. A little stouter each time she comes ; a few more fine little wrinkles, making her brown skin look like an etching on copper ; her eyes fixed, almost staring, her manner always timid and half-frightened. It is May, and she is wearing a peach-coloured gown and a white straw hat trimmed with black velvet and a green and white poppy. " In honour of Flaubert, no doubt," thought Goncourt ; " How beautiful and charming her head ! But mummified more and more. That mulatto type of hers is always more marked with age."

The hard stare softened and the splendid eyes brightened as she saw Renan, and gave a warm handshake to Dumas. She

was generally silent at these *spirituel* feasts. God had not given her the gift of speech, and she always wilted under the exuberant paradoxes and brilliant thrusts of her brothers of the pen. But she was an attentive listener, whispering little asides to Flaubert and applauding with a soft laugh, or exclamation, a well-turned remark that pleased her.

" Talking literature ? " said Flaubert. " As usual I suppose, agreeing about nothing."

" No," said Dumas, with a gallant salute to the lady. " We are discussing Love."

" We were saying," added Jules de Goncourt, who was an ardent anti-feminist, " that women writers cannot depict love, because, as they are only *bas-bleus*, they cannot experience it."

She fell into the trap at once.

" How dare you say that before me ? What you might reproach women writers with is having loved too much, and I myself am the proof of that."

" You ! You have never loved anything but an image of the future heroes of your novels," said Gautier.

" Like the marionettes you dress up in the costume appropriate to your piece," added Dumas. " Is that loving ? "

" See," put in Flaubert ; " we four, writers of worth ; are any of us great lovers ? "

" I don't know," said Mme. Sand, " but it is stupid to say—only to cite late ones—that Mme. de Staël, and Mme. de Girardin, and Mme. d'Agoult have not been great lovers, and it seems to me that *I* have lived for tenderness," she added naïvely. " It now remains to be proved that a pretty woman can have a great deal of talent, and still be a simple affectionate wife, like any other."

" That certainly is a study to be made," replied Goncourt, and the conversation was suddenly diverted into witticisms at the expense of the heroes in his novels, and thence wandered to Memoirs. Flaubert detested them.

" Your Memoirs are the worst things you have done," he said, turning to Mme. Sand.

" I think so too," she agreed heartily, " and you couldn't make me re-read them for the rarest plant you could find."

Goncourt was watching the quick gestures of her little

" anti-republican hands," so wonderfully delicate and graceful, almost lost in the full lace ruffles of her sleeves, as they lighted and re-lighted her cigarette. " Like a flutter of white butterflies," someone had said. His mind travelled back to the early days of Romanticism, when she seemed to him in the forefront of the fight, and to a short-lived journal he had started, *L'Éclair*, whose initial number bore on its cover a sketch of the dome of the Institut de France, upon which three zigzag streaks of lightning were falling from heaven, labelled " Hugo ; Musset ; Sand."

They were talking about the " general public " now ; Flaubert did not favour writing down to their level.

" They are precisely the ones who need it most," Mme. Sand was declaring.

" Sentimentality ! Pity has nothing to do with Art."

" You are all *Messieurs !* There isn't a real man among you ! Love and pity cannot be separated."

" Indeed, all these descendants of Jean Jacques are unable to distinguish between good and bad," laughed Flaubert sarcastically.

The talk took a spicier flavour, and George Sand withdrew behind her impenetrable eyes. Someone told a dirty story about Baudelaire.

" You don't know how I detest that sort of thing," she murmured to Gautier under cover of the general laugh it raised.

Gautier was silent, thinking, perhaps, of Michelet's tribute to her—" The pleasure of finding near me a very pure woman . . . I enjoyed her moral virginity ! "

" We should not forget that she is, after all, a woman," he reflected.

" Poor Théo," she whispered, guessing his thoughts, " You are always remorseful when you have emancipated yourself too freely in my ears. God knows, I wouldn't for the world put a damper on your wit."

As she walked home with Flaubert she offered him her reaction to the Magny dinners.

" I can't stand much of that heady atmosphere. I am a peasant, physically and morally. I was brought up in the country and I can't change. I have never been at home in the

literary world. I lose all my individuality there, and I want to crawl off alone or get with simple, primitive people. I like people without *esprit*, whom I can understand without effort and listen to without being amazed. I think the Magny dinners would be much gayer without me."

"They are getting dull," mused Flaubert. "The last time I went they only talked about Bismarck and Luxembourg; the conversation of a bunch of door-keepers! They are all dying; stuffed with coffins like an old cemetery!"

"After all," he added, "You and I are about the only people who really talk Literature nowadays."

* * * * *

Gustave Flaubert had attended that famous performance of "Villemer," sitting in the box of his friend, the Princess Mathilde, and had been profoundly moved. He had already met Mme. Sand several times with Dumas at the Magny dinners, and although not a devotee of "the sex" he had wanted to know her better. He was slightly deterred from too eager advances by the memory of her refusal to write a preface for one of his first books, which their friend Thoré had importuned—a refusal graciously made, nevertheless, on the reasonable ground that if the book was good it needed no preface of hers, and if it was bad, no preface would save it. After "Villemer" however, his enthusiasm overcame his bashfulness, and the acquaintance blossomed into friendship. He had an opportunity to prove his devotion after Manceau's death, and made frequent trips to Palaiseau to cheer her solitude by his droll stories. There was always a successor ready to slip into the empty chair by her chimney as soon as it was vacant!

Flaubert and Mme. Sand found the charm of mutual discovery heightened by the obstacles to mutual understanding.

"Under what constellation were you born," he wrote her, "to unite in your person qualities which are so numerous and so rare? I know not what kind of sentiment I bear you, but I feel for you a special and particular kind of tenderness which I have felt for no one up to the present. You inspire in me a great respect."

The days had long passed when George could love her friends *con amore;* she gave Flaubert the best that remained in

her—fraternal and maternal love. She told him that he, too, was a " being apart "—very mysterious, gentle as a sheep withal, and difficult to conceive as the " frightfully wicked " writer which the possibly sullied eyes of Sainte-Beuve had descried. She longed to probe the secrets of his soul, the experiences which a great mind like his must have undergone before he could produce such masterpieces. But while she had always played lightly with her own disasters, his seemed to her to have been too profound and sacred to be touched with any but the deepest respect.

These profound wounds were certainly not affairs of the heart, at least so far as any lady was involved in them, for the only specimen of the fair sex that had ever impinged perceptibly upon Flaubert's orbit had been that plump, blond Louise Colet of the Academy prize, who had once said that she could have adored Musset as a god had he been richer, and who sold the verses he wrote her for one hundred and sixty francs when she was hard up. " How many souls have fallen in these arms," chanted the wits, as her petals began to fall, while she still kept a " smile on her lip and a tear in her eye," and wrote insipid verses for the *Mode* and the *Monde Illustré*. Pradier, who was making a bust of Flaubert's sister, had steered the young and as yet unknown author into those much-enduring arms ; " He wants to produce Literature and you must advise him ! " Their liaison had endured several years and was diversified by the usual quarrels and reconciliations, but all that was far behind Flaubert now, and he had settled down into an avowed woman-hater, not on principle but by taste, and an incorrigible bachelor, paternal but never gallant. Certainly the chubby Louise could not be responsible for his cynicism and bitterness. George Sand had to go back of that, to his sombre youth, overshadowed by the curse of epilepsy. She was positive that his realist pose covered a deep craving for lyrical expression.

Flaubert was living almost as a recluse, with his deaf old mother, in a pretty, old-fashioned white house, at Croisset, on the banks of the Seine, near Rouen. From the windows of his big study he could almost touch the ships that passed on their way to Rouen, and on the opposite banks were woods and fields

and red and white cows. His field-glasses brought the passing world quite as near as he desired. Like George Sand, he passed his nights—and also his days—writing. His capacity for work was enormous and he had no marionettes.

Occasionally he went up to Paris, where he kept a simple bachelor apartment and " talked literature " with his friends, —the timid and learned Taine, the tall, slim Edmond de Goncourt, Tourguénieff with the big, white face and soft voice— receiving them on Sundays in his flowing dressing-gown and silk cap. Or he went to the luxurious salon that Princess Mathilde presided over with her sweet, fat smile, where everyone was free to say anything that came into his head. And he went to the Magny dinners. This was all of Flaubert's life that was visible to the naked eye.

Like most of George Sand's friends, he was blond ; a great broad-shouldered muscular fellow, a little stooping, with long curling hair, overhanging brows, long lashes shading pleasant blue eyes, and a long fair moustache—a sort of early Norman hero. She liked his splendid, frank laugh, his big, sonorous voice. She was positive that what he most needed for the exorcism of his bitterness was gaiety. The gaiety of Nohant !

Flaubert held off from the Nohant adventure as long as he could. He suspected that he would be awkward at the kind of play cultivated there. He preferred to have Mme. Sand quite to himself at Croisset. He persuaded her that a " stray animal of her species " would not be a troublesome anomaly in his cloistered life, and she enjoyed her first visit so much that she came again. He took her to see all the monuments of Rouen, and that done, they were free to sit all day and all night in his great study with its gilded Buddha and its Turkish divan, " talking literature," and watching the gray river that ran by so swiftly, " saying, quick ! quick ! "

" Everything about you is so calm and comfortable, I can't see why your mind is so agitated and impatient," she said. " It must be this great Seine passing and repassing with its ships and its tides, so black and so sinister sometimes, in spite of those fresh banks on the opposite shore."

" What astounds me in you," retorted Flaubert, " is that you have not already died twenty times, you who have thought

and written so much. See the years I struggle to perfect just one novel while you are pouring out a dozen! Why, I sit sometimes for hours at that table, without writing a word, just trying to chisel out one little phrase. Then I read aloud what I have written, and I don't like it, and I must begin all over again."

This was very like the way a certain composer of lovely nocturnes had agonised in her own home, and it seemed to Mme. Sand equally unnecessary. She looked at the poor maimed manuscript of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, which he had been reading to her—interlined, erased, crossed, the margins filled with alterations and additions, bearing witness to the deadly battle with *style* poor Flaubert fought every day and hour, and she talked to him exactly as she had lectured Chopin years before.

"Why fight so? Writing should be a pleasure. I write as I garden, or embroider or make preserves, because I like to. It is my correspondence that is hard work. This slow, painful production of yours seems to me a little coquettish!"

She was a poet; she sang as the birds sing. Flaubert was an artist; his pen was his chisel and brush, his art was a sacrament.

"But words have souls," he protested. "They are like the notes on a piano or violin or the colours on a palate, their harmonies must be studied; they must be handled with respect."

"True, but the power to do it is not within ourselves. It is not I who produce, it is the Other, who sings as he wills. I let the wind play with my old harp and it has its highs and its lows, it is all the same to me."

"I don't believe there is another example of your method of composition in all literature," declared Flaubert, who was getting excited. "Like a smooth, placid stream that goes straight on, just so many words to a page; large, even, clear handwriting on neatly ruled blue sheets."

"I can never work in your way, that is plain. You can't dig up my roots; no use trying to make them sprout tulips; they can only produce potatoes! The artist in me often touches the grocer. I like to classify and analyse; I touch the peda-

gogue. I like to sew and scrub the children ; I touch the servant. I like to romp and frolic ; I touch the idiot. I am a vulgar artist, you see ; I write for the people. You have lofty things to say ; you are particular about the way you say them ; you write for the few, the *élite*."

" And set so high a standard for myself that I have never been able to touch it, you mean," he added with a bitter laugh.

And they went out upon the terrace above which the high, wooded rocks loomed against the clear evening sky, and looked over at the lights of Rouen just beginning to twinkle.

" But what you do is so splendid," mused Flaubert. " What talent, *nom de Dieu*, what talent ! *Consuelo*, for instance. I wept aloud in my silent study, when Porpora placed that sacred kiss upon Consuelo's forehead. I *saw* Mme. George Sand leaning over the balcony of Mme. Viardot's château at Rosay ! I saw the setting sun on your black hair. I was there too, in the moat, in a boat under the tower ! I lived with that book for four whole days."

This, by the way, was the book of which Balzac had written Mme. Hanska, " After *La Compagnon du Tour de France*, to have done this ! It is such a fall that there is nothing more to be expected from George Sand. *Consuelo* is the product of all that is most empty, most improbable, most childish. *Ennui* in sixteen volumes ! "

" *Consuelo ? Consuelo ?* What is that ? " Mme. Sand rejoined, laughingly, to Flaubert's eulogy. " Something of mine ? You read it ? Did it really amuse you ? Then I will re-read it myself one of these days and I will like it myself because you do."

" I like all you write. Your stories are always interesting. I must confess, though, that your people are extraordinarily virtuous ! While one reads, one accepts them, because you have a faculty of making them appear so real. But do you actually believe that people are so good ? Are there many like them in the world, do you think ? Confess, now, that you arrange nature a little bit ! "

" But are they really so bad as *you* make them ? " Mme. Sand did not like to be accused of making her characters too virtuous.

(*Musée Carnavalet*)

GEORGE SAND, CRAYON BY COUTURE

"I don't make them bad. They make themselves. I present the facts and the facts speak for themselves. I don't judge."

"But ought you not to judge?"

"The novelist has no right to express his opinions on any subject. He has no mission to moralise or instruct. He is merely an observer of human emotions, good or bad. You are always discussing chastity as a masculine virtue. It is one of your pet hobbies. I don't believe in chastity for my part, unless one is an artist!"

"All the same I say chastity is *good*, and I shall go on making my people who love each other in the good old way, gay, artistic characters of the kind I have lived among all my life."

Alas, what had become of those "tumultuous senses that moaned defiance and answered roar for roar as spirits can," which the English poetess had recognised? Smothered in a golden haze of Utopias that the gentle sun of autumn spreads over all the banality and ugliness and stupidity of life! Flaubert was lashing himself into one of his furies. He could not endure opposition.

"The trouble with you," George concluded, "is that you have forgotten how to laugh. Come to Nohant and let us teach you."

* * * * *

The bare thought of that hurly-burly life at Nohant, such as he conceived it from Mme. Sand's letters, put Flaubert in a perspiration. "House-parties of ten or fifteen guests"; "Balls in the salon every Sunday with Aurore draped in my old crocheted cape for an evening wrap"; "Rehearsals for plays, carnivals, mid-lent fantaisies"; "Aurore's birthday"; "Peasant weddings and christenings with banquets, sweetmeats, cornemuse, fireworks and largesse to the poor"; "Holidays without an hour of quiet; romping children, little and big"; Watch-night on New Year's eve, leaping on each other's necks at midnight with supper and gifts afterwards; and everlasting marionettes, dancing, and disguises. "Great Heavens!" cried Flaubert, "When does this woman find time to write letters to the *Temps*, praising a new method of teaching children to read in ten days; and letters to the *Presse* about Arrault's Red Cross

organisation; and letters to Dumas, proposing that they start a new magazine for readers who are too progressive for the *Revue des Deux Mondes;* and letters to Berton, proposing that he and she get a new theatre subsidised, besides fortnightly articles for Charles Edmund and at least two novels a year; not to mention long letters, ten a day, to her dear friends and the piles of manuscripts that are submitted to her by every young fledgling who thinks he can write poems or a play? And yet she talks about her long quiet winter evenings in a country-house that is so conducive to the placid enjoyment of new books and the re-reading of old ones!"

But it was all very simple, as Flaubert, if he had not been a man, would have understood. The young author's manuscripts were labelled and put in a certain drawer, without reading, and a civil note sent explaining that she never criticised manuscripts, and stating the number attached to each manuscript, in case they would like to send for them. And as for the carnival disguises and fancy costumes, one had only to go to the wardrobe in order to descend as Cassandra or Harlequin or Figaro. Aurore's little crimson satin suit, faced with white, in which she looked so cunning as Louis XVI. had only taken her three days to make!

"But if you would only come to Nohant you would see for yourself how I do it, and if you don't come I shall take you by the hair and bring you some day."

"I dare not come to Nohant. Real images would dim the ideal ones. I am a man of wax and I wouldn't be able to think of anything but marionettes for a month afterwards." But the December evening at last arrived, when after many postponements and excuses, and after being assured that he could wear his dressing-gown and slippers all day if he chose, Flaubert lifted his long legs out of the old yellow diligence that stopped in front of the Nohant pavilion, and was escorted by the light of a lantern up the mysterious garden path to the big house that lighted up the snowy lawn from its hospitable windows. In the dining-room which he entered from the terrace, the candles were burning and the table was spread for dinner with the old napery and silver of the great Marshal Saxe, while from the big dim kitchen at the end of the hall, where coppers

glittered and the roast sizzled and sputtered encouragingly on the turnspit, a delicious fragrance of coffee and fresh-baked bread promised well for a cold hungry traveller. Flaubert laughed his big genial laugh, shook hands with Maurice—handsome, informal, but always a bit problematical—kissed the two wonderful little grandchildren and showed a proper respect for Lena and the fat good-natured Plauchut, without whom no holiday festivities were complete. He was relieved to have Tourguénieff for a fellow guest; they could fortify each other when there was a satiety of marionettes and fancy balls.

There was, of course, a Christmas play, at which it was the custom to present the Christmas gifts, with the assistance of Balandard and of certain curious creatures dressed in green, who, it was explained, were slaves from the Cape Verde Islands. A terrible crash behind the scenes was at first supposed to be the *finale* of a china jar containing a plant, which was about to be presented to Mme. Sand, but after everyone had screamed and lamented, it proved to be only one of the famous Nohant jokes. Flaubert was not a satisfactory marionette "fan." He was too critical, and disconcerted Maurice by discovering anachronisms and contradictions in the plot. But the supper which followed, with *champagne frappé* on snow, and the Berrichon songs that closed the evening put him in excellent humour.

"You see," cried his "Old Troubadour," who was amazingly flushed and excited, "what I mean by plunging in torrents of *far niente!* One must have a family to be able to forget one's trade in this stupid, childish, healthy way that we do. You ought to be married—have a mistress or a wife! It is odious to be alone. Isn't there a brat somewhere in the world whose father you can think yourself? Be a slave; forget yourself for him."

"The female animal has never dove-tailed into my existence," replied Flaubert, yawning, for it was nearly dawn and these unusual dissipations were exhausting. "There is an ecclesiastical basis in my temperament that few people suspect."

But he decided that he had found the key to the difference between him and his Old Troubadour. She was a new soul; she was experiencing all the emotions of a life that is beginning,

of an existence just opening, while he was an old, old soul ; so old that he sometimes felt that he had always existed, and that his memory went back to the Pharaohs.

* * * * *

" I am sad for my big Flaubert," said George Sand, after his play had failed and his " Éducation Sentimentale " had been roughly handled by the critics. " He is superb, but damn !—he can never be popular ! "

The worst of it was that, notwithstanding his lofty disdain of the stupid reviews and the vulgar public he was much more bothered by criticism than he admitted. The Old Troubadour never had thought critics of much use to authors, as all they said was from a purely personal point of view, and she preferred to ignore them. Man is always so much bigger than his work ! It was never a question with her of producing a masterpiece ; the important point was how far the author himself surpassed his work.

" I haven't your temperament," said Flaubert, during the exasperating discussions about the presentation of her " Mlle. La Quintinie " at the Odéon. " I can't sail above this miserable earth like you and the immense Tourguénieff and the gentle Renan. You are too stoical and indifferent. I am as sensitive as if I had been skinned. It is one's duty to protest against injustice and stupidity. Curse this dramatic mania ! "

Every class and every party of this miserable humanity came in for a blast of " H-h-h-indignation." He took bromide of potassium to quiet his nerves and got eczema in consequence.

" Mustn't be sick. Mustn't be cross, Old Troubadour," she wrote. " Mustn't cough. Blow your nose and get well. Even if France is mad, humanity stupid and we are all badly constructed animals ; still we must love our fellow-animals just the same."

It was a severe strain on the most confirmed optimists to be obliged to love their fellow-animals during the horrors of the Franco-Prussian war, and if the Old Troubadour had not felt obliged to whistle in order to keep up the spirits of the other Old Troubadour, even her persistent faith in the goodness of the people might have followed her trust in the good intentions of Louis Napoleon—long since abandoned—in the general

débacle of the siege, the surrender and the Commune. The shock of a war which sucked up all her splendid young men in its horrible vortex, and threw helpless, fatherless families upon her inexhaustible bounty, had aroused her rudely from her pleasant dreamings over botany and butterflies and her periodical singing of her " little romances to the Moon."

Cut off almost entirely from all communication with Paris, except such as leaked through by means of carrier pigeons or of a hapless balloonist fallen in the meadows of the Indre, their horses requisitioned, small-pox and cattle disease raging around them, and the constant menace of invasion if the city yielded ; in the dead calm of uselessness and isolation in a remote country-house, George Sand could still " thrill like a girl of twenty " over the magnificent resistance of the besieged Parisians. The Odéon turned into a hospital, and her actress friends engaged in nursing the wounded, " Champi " being played for the benefit of the Ambulance, nearly all her royalties handed over for the relief of the wounded and suffering, a shell crashing through her house in the Latin Quarter—these were a few of the personal reactions of the war upon the châtelaine of Nohant. She began to be doubtful of Gambetta, notwithstanding Juliette Adam's assurance that if she could know him she would adopt him as a " son," and declared first for Favre and then for Thiers. One of the big balloons that maintained communication between the besieged city and the government at Bordeaux was named " George Sand " ; the other was " Barbès " ; and with the certainty that the Empire was buried amid the ruins it had pulled about them, she still saw hope for the future amid the ugliness of the present, finished another novel and went on " singing to keep her nest warm." " People of France, love one another ! Love one another or we are lost ! "

" Ah, dear good old master," groaned Flaubert, " If only you could *hate !* That is what you lack—hatred. Notwithstanding your great sphynx eyes, you have always seen the world through a golden mist. It proceeds from the sun of your heart, but the shadows have crept up and you no longer see clearly. Come now, cry out, thunder ! Take your great lyre an strike its brazen strings and the monsters will fly."

" You want me to stop loving ? You want me to say that I have been deceived all my life ? That humanity is despicable, always has been and always will be, the people always ferocious, the bourgeois always cowardly ? You have known it from your youth ? Ah, then you have never been young ! How we differ ! For, if to have loved is always to be young, I have never been old."

When to his other grievances, among which the quartering of twelve " hideous " Prussian officers at Croisset was not the least, was added the spectacle of the Commune, Flaubert's seething wrath fell upon his friend George's pet institution of Universal Suffrage as responsible for most of the ills of humanity. This pestiferous power of the multitude could never be dominated as long as the brutal ignorant herd had the right to elect the representatives who governed the nation.

" I am worth more than twenty Croisset electors ; a man's right to a voice doesn't make that voice a good one."

This was touching George Sand in a vital spot. She had long ago thrown over most of Louis Blanc's Utopias, and her woman's heart was prepared to take up the cudgels for whichever party was under foot, whether bourgeois or working-man. She was a free lance and her adherences always followed her emotions. But the one doctrine to which she clung through every storm and assault was that of Universal Suffrage. This was a public question he had raised now, not just a case of chronic indigestion, and she answered him in a new Letter of a Voyager, " To a Friend," published in the *Presse*.

" And who are the people ? You and I ! We cannot deny it. There are not two races. If one of us has the good fortune to possess something the other has not, it is his place to teach it to the ignorant man because he *is* a man, instead of despising him because he is ignorant."

" Bah," cried Flaubert, " Free compulsory education ! That will finish the good people. It will merely multiply the fools."

And they continued to hold their separate opinions, to quarrel and admonish, and to be the best of friends. He still proclaimed himself " Gust. Flaubert, otherwise called the R.P. Idiot of the Barnabites, Director of the Ladies of Dis-

illusion," and she never passed a day without thinking of the " other Old Troubadour in his solitude *en artiste*," disdainful of the pleasures of this world and of *flanerie* and all its joys. " We are the most different workers in the world, but each one needs his opposite to complete himself."

CHAPTER XIX

A CALM SEA AND A PROSPEROUS VOYAGE

" Les amours qui nous font souffrir ne sont pas les amours que Dieu nous destinait, et nous nous sommes trompés en croyant qu'ils venaient de lui. Vienne le regne de la Verité. Ce que nous avons souffert n'aura plus de nom dans les langues humaines. Il n'y aura plus de poètes de la douleur, et la joie en fera de plus éloquents, quoique nous ne le comprenons pas aujourd'hui."

Lettre à Sainte-Beuve.[1]

THE last night of autumn. Clear cold moonlight. Thick, blighting frost, passing like a fire over the garden, gripping every bare twig of shrubs and trees, crisping the heaps of dead leaves in the sheltered corners, blackening and shrivelling the drooping stalks of the last surviving plants in the parterre, and spreading a winding sheet over the quiet meadows that slope away towards the banks where the Indre rolls its sluggish, thickening stream.

" The first bite of winter ; the funeral kiss ! Autumn is dying to-night. To-morrow will be winter."

For a long time George Sand stood at the window of her study watching death creep over her dear garden. It was so still that she could hear the water falling over the mill-dam a mile away. She knew by heart every stiffening stalk and shrinking leaf, every branch and twig of the rigid tree-tops so black and still against the bright sky. They were her friends, part and parcel of her very life-blood for seventy long years. They were hers.

" This is not the harmless white frost which transfigures and beautifies and then melts away in the morning sun, leaving

[1] " The love that makes us suffer is not the love that God destined for us and we deceive ourselves in believing that it came from Him. The reign of Truth approaches. For what we have suffered there will no more be a name in human tongues. There will be no more poets of pain, and joy will make more eloquent ones still, although we do not understand it to-day." —*Letter to Sainte-Beuve.*

everything more radiant than before," she thought. "This is the real, the implacable frost, austere and solemn, that mows down everything. Who would think, to see the moon so bright, that death walks in the garden to-night!"

An owl hooted from a tree down in the pasture, and she closed the window with a little shiver, leaving the curtains drawn to let the moon look in. How warm and cosy her study! How beautiful the mellow light from her fire reflected in the glowing copper of the chimney! How sweet the faces of her friends that smiled at her from the dim walls and from her littered desk! How good life was! She threw another fagot on the fire, lighted a fresh cigarette, drew her warm dressing-gown a little closer about her plump, rather clumsy body, and, pushing her easy chair a little closer to the hearth, slowly drank her cup of hot coffee that always attended on her nocturnal vigils.

"The first frost and the first fire!" she said. "I always know when the colchicums bloom in the meadow that winter is at hand and it will soon be time for me to begin turning out my little annual novel. But I believe I have earned a night of idleness, and while all my dear children in this old house are sleeping, I think I will renew my acquaintance with a person who has been rather neglected of late years, amid all the pleasures and activities of my busy life. I think I will invoke the society and soul experiences of Aurore Dupin. Even though the last word may not yet have been uttered in those experiences, I will try to recall a sentence here, a cry, a question there, a reply further on, that marks the stages of her progress."

This little room! The epitome of her life! Room in which a brown little maid with big, heavy, black eyes had passed so many solitary nights, huddled in blankets and keeping herself awake with tobacco and strong coffee, just as she was doing now; pouring over Rousseau and Leibnitz, and dreaming of Corambé, with ever an ear for a sound from the dying woman in the room below; *confidant* of so many hopes and agonies, of such burning words of affection and reproach and aspiration, in journals to Aurélien and to Alfred and to Michel, now stuffed into some rag-bag, no doubt, and the passion that inspired them long ago burned out with not even an ember left to rekindle

their memory. Good old roomy desk so friendly and generous, where she had written thousands of letters with which France was strewn ; letters to prisoners, to beggars, to publishers and would-be poets ; letters to actors and theatre-managers ; Blaise Bonnin's letters to his dear people ; letters to lovers and princes and friends. Useful, shabby old book-rack and portfolio which had supported so many hundreds of pages of closely-written manuscript from midnight to dawn, when her head was numb and dizzy with weariness. Priceless souvenirs of happy days and golden journeyings among the treasures of this wonderful old world, all sparkling and shining to-night in the ruddy light of the leaping flame ; neat rows of " pebbles and rocks " carefully labelled and arranged by a hand that had long been dust, but each radiating some precious souvenir of sunshine, wind or storm, of glorious fields and mountains and shores where her happy feet had wandered ; fat, bulging old volumes of her Herbarium, crumbling relics of the high and holy mysteries of creation, of the propagation and continuation of life. Quiet, sheltering walls, from which old familiar objects gleamed and then disappeared in the flickering light ; the faces of her friends, of her dear little grandchildren, the wreath of pressed flowers from Rousseau's garden at La Charmette ; Delacroix's painting of *Lélia*, and Grandsire's water colours of Gargilesse, Chopin's bust, poor little Jeanne's last toy. And on the shelves that lined the familiar room, all these rows of books, dressed in sedate brown leather or in frivolous yellow or green paper ; her grandmother's books, rusty and worn by much handling, her own books, new and uncut ; presentation copies by her friends ; Musset's Poems, a complete set of Sainte-Beuve's *Lundis ;* Leroux's *Livre d'Humanité*, Lamennais' *Paroles d'un Croyant*, Flaubert's *Salambo*, Dumas' dramas, that little novel of poor Duvernet's, Maurice's *Masques et Buffons*, and most precious of all in these latter days, a much worn copy of Raynaud's *Ciel et Terre*. And of most of these beloved friends, these books and a tender memory was all that remained to-night !

The old bunch—all gone but Papet ! Planet had been the first—so brave and cheerful to the end ; then the Malgache, while she was botanising at Spezia and gathering duplicates of

all the rare specimens for him. Next Rollinat, always her faithful Pylade ; though his marriage had separated them somewhat, their hearts had never changed. The Gaulois, who had never forgiven her for her acceptance of that poor absurd Louis Napoleon, and had sulked till the end, after he came back from exile. The gentle Charles Duvernet, her aid and prop, so patient under his years of blindness, had been the last to go. Polyte, her funny, old Polyte, who had quarrelled with her and cursed her and loved her, whose crooked brain, crazed by liquor, had worn out before his body—and Dudevant, weak stupid old Dudevant, his body too had survived his mind, but at least he had been well cared for by that Jenny he had made his mistress and housekeeper, and their rather decent daughter. Their last meeting had been at Guillery, when Maurice's baby died. " I confide my old husband to your care," she had told Jenny, when leaving. Ah well ! She had nothing to regret on that score anyway ! It was not their fault that their wires got crossed so unfortunately.

Other faces began to crowd around her ; Alfred, blond and nonchalant ; Michel's rough-hewn features and colossal head ; Chopin with his soft hair—how beautiful the essence of his soul ! Delacroix, handsome and imperious ; Boucoiran, to whom she had so hoped to entrust the education of her two little girls ; Delatouche, who had given her that first hard shove into literature ; Balzac, that whirlwind of genius and egoism, but so warm-hearted and amusing ; Leroux, who had ended his days in Jersey, as poor and unhappy and visionary as ever, always starting journals, and varying philosophy with inventions for making wax and ink and fertilisers out of human guano. It seemed only yesterday that she had followed his bier on foot, when they brought him back to Paris and gave him a public funeral ; but since then Sainte-Beuve had gone too, Sainte-Beuve who carried so many of her confidences—she had no secrets—in his breast, but whom she had seen so seldom in the latter years when he had become such an eccentric garçon. A pleasant memory, a touching one too, had been the quiet demonstration at his funeral, about her carriage ; even Flaubert and Dumas who were with her, had been moved by the respectful gathering of the crowd to do homage to her—

as one of Sainte-Beuve's old circle, of course, not for any other reason !

" What is fairer and purer than the inner vision of these dead friends," she asked herself. " They return, not precisely as they were, for mysterious absence has rejuvenated their attitude toward life, purified their views, softened their words, elevated their souls. They have put away all those prejudices and errors and suspicions that were inseparable from the incomplete environment in which they lived, and they ask you to do so too. They have more light, they judge life calmly and wisely. They have kept and developed all that is best of themselves, We do not need to beg them to forget our errors or shortcomings ; their very appearance wipes out all that."

But why linger among those who were gone and whom she would see again so soon ? Here were the young living creatures all about her, for whose sake she could not dry up or stand still, but must keep gravitating to the end, and go forward on the road that mounts. Borie and Lambert, successful and happily married ; her nephews, the grandchildren of Polyte and of Caroline, fine young fellows all of them ; Henri Amic, one of the last of the aspiring young souls that had turned to her for sympathy and direction ; and all those other great spirits—the protesting, pugnacious Flaubert, so noble and affectionate, Dumas and Juliette Adam, her " big son " and " big daughter " ; Plauchut, Prince Jerome Napoleon, who kept her still in touch with the world of Paris. And her precious children and grandchildren, the dear little girls who now completely answered all the wants and yearnings of her heart ; most of all Aurore, who filled now the *premier rôle* in the drama of her life. There always had to be a *premier rôle* for her !

" Oh, your wise old folks must be treated tenderly, but to the children you must turn for the latest news from the outer world. They arrive with their trailing clouds of glory, their souls full of the mysterious secrets of the Divine. We can't accompany them to the end of the road, but our memory will remain with them, and there is nothing tenderer and more strengthening than dear and firm memories."

But here was the clock striking midnight, and Aurore Dupin's soul still waiting to be interrogated ; the long winding

course of its waters to be explored, before they reached the wide calm meadows where the mists and billows of the unknown ocean were sometimes visible. What had she found in that wide periphery of her voyage ? in the splendid storms and in the pleasant sheltered places ?

Passion ? George Sand smiled benevolently as she stirred the dying embers and opened the old green lacquer box where she kept her reserve of cigarettes.

" They make fun to-day of our despairs and our sufferings of forty years ago, but after all, their laughter is sadder than our tears were. In those days it was the fashion to put all heroism in passion as to-day it is scepticism that is the style. And I am mobile clay, I was moulded by my age. . . . I did not seek love, I accepted it when it was offered. . . . It was ignorance that made me suppose that the artist's destiny was to become the prey of passion. I saw badly because I did not see enough. . . . Dr. Favre said one day that every soul is dominated by one supreme instinct; mine has been maternal love My mistake lay in not keeping it for the worthwhile objects."

A match flashed in the shadow, and lighted up the long row of her Complete Edition by Calmann-Lévy—almost eighty volumes !

" Literature ? Ah, leave my books aside ! They have nothing to do with the aspirations of my soul. I have even forgotten their titles, much more what I said in them. Only a few days ago someone read me a passage that he admired. It was not bad, and I asked him who wrote it. ' You did,' he said. I hadn't the slightest recollection of it ! I like other people's books and I am glad when all these young beginners succeed and can have butter on their spinach, but what have my books done for me ? They have amused people, made them happier perhaps ; but will anyone read them fifty years hence ? Not a soul ! Even now I practically do not exist for the younger generation of readers. I am too virtuous, too optimistic. I am out of fashion.

" Money ? It is only a symbol. I have always said to it, ' You represent ease, security, independence, the repose necessary to my old age, the sanctuary of my egoism. But you don't tempt me ; I despise you.'

" I have passed my life in writing when I wanted to meditate, sitting still when I wanted to travel, in sordid self-denials—luxuries of dressing-gowns and little matters of pretty slippers which I love, in not over-feeding my guests, in giving up operas and theatres, art-exhibitions. . . . I have lived from day to day on the frontier of work, and of the million francs my books have earned for me, what remains ? Twenty thousand francs for my grandchildren's dots ! Someone else got it all. And both they and I are happier than if I had it now."

Another half-burned cigarette splashed into the little waiting tumbler of water, and a fresh one was lighted. The flame caught the gleaming glass front of a case of mounted butterflies on the wall.

" Science ! Ah, how I would like to give up my whole life to botany ! That would have been heaven on earth. To have passed more time in admiring, wondering, understanding and less in the immense task of just living, and trying to keep faith with your ideals !

" I have wept tears of blood in these last days for my illusions about the people," she mused as her hand rested on a shabby old volume at her side—*Le Contrat Social.* " How long it will take to recover from the humiliations of the Commune ! I can't follow you, my old friend, Jean Jacques, in your ' Contrat Social ' ; Montaigne has saved me from you, and you, thank God, have saved me from Montaigne ! I may have talked differently once. I hope I did. I would not like to think that I could not modify my opinions as I advance through life. My heart has always remained the same, but fewer fantastic flowers grow there now.

" Dear France ! more than ever great and good and patient, so easy to govern if only we all work together ! We are only at the first dawn of our intellectual and moral life yet. . . . ' Love one another,' that is all we need to know, and then there will be no more need of kings and popes, or even republics.

" And shall I see its fulfilment ? In another planet ? Why not another ? The soul is free and can go to all worlds. But why not here ? Why cannot we transform this world where our generations follow each other, passing on the work and attainments from one to the next, as Channing, that American

writer whom I have been reading lately, teaches? Certainly we can't do it by the doctrine of Individualism!

"What was it my funny old Polyte used to say? 'From the time I was a dog!' I can say, 'From the time I was a vegetable!' . . . Flaubert thinks he has a very clear vision at times, of a previous existence. Even if one recalls nothing distinctly, one has a vivid sentiment of his own renewal in eternity.

"'From world to worlds, we can, detaching ourselves from the animalities that here fight against our spirituality, make ourselves fit to reclothe a body purer, more appropriate to the needs of the soul; less preyed upon by the infirmities of human life.'

"That is my creed, and all I need after all. I no longer seek for a solution of all the enigmas that tormented my youth. My mind is at rest; my heart, never! . . . I have nothing to ask of God that the law of life has not offered me, and if I have not used it well, it is my own fault."

How still the room had become! And the stillness of death outside in the green moonlight. Almost, at that moment, one could hear the rustling of wings.

"How good life is!" she exclaimed aloud. "No, I am in no hurry to die, and shall scribble a lot of paper yet. The heart of this old tree is good still. The sap functions in spite of the battered bark."

The pale grey dawn looked in at the window. The fuel was gone, the lamp burned out. The window panes were covered with graceful arabesques of frost—fantastic, glistening mountains, peaks, and pine forests and delicate stalactites. Her watch was over; her lost self had found itself again; her ME was no longer alone.

"And now," she added, "while I undress, I will have a nice little quarter of an hour to continue my novel in my head!"

But before she entered her bedroom, she paused a moment at the spacious old desk; hesitated, then wrote something rapidly on a scrap of paper and pasted it on the top of the desk.

"La Nature agit par progrès, *itus et reditus*. Elle passe et revient, puis va plus loin, puis deux fois moins, puis plus que jamais."

Her favourite lines from Pascal.

" The world goes badly," she said, " But I do not need to worry about leaving it with the joy of a solution ! "

She extinguished the last embers, placed a vase with the last roses from the garden—the most beautiful of the year always—farther from the window, and turned to where her blue bed with its drawn curtains invited to repose.

" The last years are the best after all, when we are detached from all that is not worth while and walk firmly in the way of progress ! One wastes so much at twenty ; the winter days count double. What a glorious thing it is to be old! "

* * * * *

It was June, in 1876, and the birds were singing and the roses were blooming in the old garden at Nohant as gaily as they did on that day almost sixty years before when Aurore Dupin laid away her convent uniform and copybooks and walked out into the park to meet Life.

There was no one walking there now but the curé of Nohant-Vic who had come to proffer the last rites of the church to the soul that was struggling to free itself from its outworn bodily wrappings. The good curé had been politely assured by Plauchut and by Solange Clésinger that as Mme. Sand had not yet asked for the absolution, it was better not to disturb her just then ; but he could not leave this good woman to go unblessed to meet her maker, and he lingered in the garden, sending up his prayers and benediction to her through the open window above, from which came feeble moans and cries of torturing pain.

Within doors, a sad little group was gathered, awe-struck, weeping, awaiting that solemn moment when a great soul passes into the Invisible. Young friends, they were, for the most part ; those whose fun and good spirits had kept Nohant gay to the last, as she liked it to be ; Oscar Cazamajou and the Simonnet boys, her grand-nephews, who had been by her bedside night and day through these last agonies ; Émile Aucante, Henri Amic, Plauchut who had arrived in time for a last embrace, her business counsellors—all were there. Doctors came and went with grave faces ; they had done all that science, in those days, could do to ease the sufferer ; nothing could

(*Photo. by R. Lécuyer*)

NOHANT FROM THE GARDEN

help now. Papet hardly left the sickroom ; soon he would be the last tree standing in the Berry bunch !

She had said all her farewells, had kissed her little grandchildren—" My darling little girls ! How I love you ! "—and was praying for the end to come quickly.

And early on the 8th of June it came, and Solange folded the restless little hands quietly on her breast and placed the pictures of Gabrielle and Aurore beneath them.

Downstairs in the big dining-room a discussion was going on ; Lena with streaming eyes, Maurice, half distracted, his white head in his hands, the Simonnets, eager and positive, Plauchut gloomy and aloof. They were considering the question of whether Mme. Sand should have a civil or a religious funeral. Solange, cool, efficient, commanding, volunteered to settle the matter summarily. She had already talked it over with her cousins ; all agreed it should be a religious burial according to the rite of the Roman Church.

" I do not agree to that," protested Plauchut, vehemently. " Mme. Sand's opinions demand that she be buried without any religious rites whatever. Her attendance at the civil funeral of Leroux and of Sainte-Beuve was a witness of her convictions on this matter."

" On the contrary," interrupted Solange, " she always ridiculed civil burials. Her attendance at Sainte-Beuve's funeral was purely out of friendship for him."

Several of those present silently protested. They recalled her praise of the simplicity and sincerity of the services held for Manceau, which were not attended by any religious ceremonies. But as no one could testify to any expression from her of wishes in regard to her own interment, the decision seemed properly to rest with Maurice. No light dawned upon Maurice ; he was beside himself with grief and could not summon sufficient self-control to cope with this perplexing situation. He appealed to Lena, who was a strong Protestant. " It is for you to decide, Maurice. She was your mother."

" Did mama ever say anything to you about it ? " he asked Solange. " Didn't she put anything in writing ? "

" The only thing I have found was a scrap of paper in a blue satin sachet, which was in her handwriting and dated some-

where about 1857. It began, ' This is the expression of my last wishes. Death not being a sad thing I want no emblem of mourning over my tomb. On the contrary, I want only flowers, trees and verdure,'—and then some instructions about her burial, but nothing about a civil burial.

" Dr. Favre agrees with me that as she has been supposed to be so radical, it would be diplomatic to conciliate the Catholics so as to disarm any criticism from them in the newspapers. And Papet," she added, " told me that if it was a civil funeral, neither he nor any of his family would attend."

At this point, Plauchut retired from the conclave and locked himself up in his room in the garden pavilion.

Maurice was growing hysterical.

" But I became a Protestant in order to break away from the Catholic forms ! " he objected faintly.

" Mama never joined the Protestant body. Therefore she is still a Catholic. One must be one or the other," Solange pursued with relentless logic.

Maurice, torn by uncertainties, paced the room, asking everyone what he should do. Everyone had an opinion ; no one liked to express it.

" What do you think about it ? " he asked Paulin de Vasson, an old friend of his father's and a cousin of Papet.

" You must consult your mother ; she is dead, but the Immortals leave their works behind them, and the answer to the questions one asks them."

" Did she put anything about it in her will ? " Maurice appealed to the lawyer who had drawn it. M. Moulin had no recollection of anything in the will relating to Mme. Sand's burial.

" Well, I am sure it is all the same to me ! " said Maurice, looking anxiously at the implacable Solange, " but there is the family to consider." It would be a pity to stir up trouble with his sister, after their very recent reconciliation almost at his mother's deathbed.

He followed Henri Amic into the next room.

" What do you think about it ? I don't want my mother to be buried like a dog, you know ! "

" But it isn't for you to wish ; only observe the wishes of

Mme. Sand, expressed in this very place, at the time of Duvernet's burial."

Meanwhile, Lena was weeping quietly in the death-chamber. She had abdicated to Solange who went about giving orders, gesticulating, making decisions. "The Princess" had returned to her own; the beast was unchained. The friends gathered in little groups, shaking their heads over the misfortune of having her in possession of the field. She shortly appeared with the permission of the Roman Church for her mother to receive burial according to its rites. She had telegraphed to the Archbishop of Bourges for it.

The following day, in a pouring rain, each trip of the Châteauroux coach deposited a group of sorrowful travellers from Paris at the familiar old garden entrance; Cadol, Borie, Lambert, Dumas, Harrisse, Calmann-Lévy, Paul Meurice, Girerd. No one had provided carriages to meet them, so some of them hired a clumsy old-fashioned "berlin" at the station. Maurice threw himself hysterically upon their necks, sobbing, "I have lost more than half of myself!" The next morning, still amid torrential rains, arrived Flaubert, Renan and Prince Napoleon. They all filed past the bier, which was covered with flowers. Only one little hand was visible, exquisitely small, and polished like ivory.

The house was overflowing; they gathered in little bunches under the dripping trees in the garden, and discussed the amazing decision in regard to the funeral. How strange that Mme. Sand had expressed no wish in her will! "She feared a clash between Maurice and Solange," said Lena. Solange, it appeared, had passed the night in her mother's room, and had rendered her all the final services.

* * * * *

About noon, with the rain still falling, the casket, covered by a mortuary cloth with a silver cross, was carried to the little church outside the gates, on the shoulders of Berry peasants in long blue smocks. The villagers, shrouded in their black-hooded cloaks, pressed around to sprinkle it with holy water, but little Marie Callaud walked beside it and distributed branches of laurel, provided by Lena, to be cast into the grave when the casket should be lowered. The priest of the

parish, a commonplace, unintelligent young man, walked in front chanting, with the old bell-ringer carrying a candle and Prince Napoleon holding one of the cords of the pall. To the consternation of Mme. Sand's good Republican and Radical friends, she was being carried to her grave between a priest and one of the last representatives of tyrant blood.

The little church was already too crowded to admit them all, and those who felt themselves closest to her lingered in the deep porch with the peasants in their capuchin cloaks kneeling about them in the rain. When the brief " absolution " and benediction were over, the crowd surged through the graveyard to the small enclosure, connected with the Nohant garden by a gate in the wall, where the grave that was to receive George Sand was canopied by an enormous cypress and surrounded by the headstones of her father and grandmother and of the two little children of Maurice and Solange who had died so long ago. The priest in his shabby violet stole was gone now, and the choir-boy with his cross had departed, and Mme. Sand was alone with the faithful friends who had shared her views and her faith, and with her dear peasants. Ernest Périgois, the son-in-law of the Malgache, had asked, as Councillor-General of the Department of the Indre, to speak for her Berry compatriots ; a simple, touching, dignified address, without sectarian or political allusions, to the relief of all ! Then it was the turn of Literature, and Paul Meurice read very slowly the magnificent Threnody that the Master, Victor Hugo, had sent over the wires that morning. " I mourn a mortal ; I salute an Immortal ! . . . Others are Great Men ; She was The Great Woman!" Both Dumas and the Prince had intended to speak and Dumas had sat up all night composing a eulogy, but between the clergy and the rain and the overwhelming majesty of Hugo's rhetoric they decided to modestly withdraw.

* * * * *

The mourners picked their way back through the mud and wet to the old house where the spirit of the châtelaine still lingered. The blight of the religious ceremony rested heavily upon some of them.

" God owed her a brighter day for this solemn hour," thought one.

" Family considerations have no place when it is a question of the conscientious convictions of the departed," thought others. What an insult to the militant author of *Mlle. La Quintinie* had been this suing for a *Catholic* burial! She, who had defied prejudice and traditionalism and the speech of people to the end, had been forced now, when she could no longer speak, to abdicate her liberty and her convictions, and compound with her enemies. Humiliated in her grave by a candle and a holy water basin! It was the irony of Fate!

But the gentle Renan saw a ray of sunshine through the gloom. After all, George Sand was greater than creeds and ceremonies. She belonged to no church, to no party; she belonged to the world.

" For my part," he said, " I would have been sorry to have passed that little church-porch shaded by great trees, without entering. I would have regretted the absence of the old chorister who chanted the psalms without understanding them, and the choir-boy who carried the holy water so absent-mindedly. They could not resolve to damn so great a soul! "

At the gate of the château as the friends sought their carriages to depart, they saw little Aurore and Gabrielle giving alms to a crowd of poor peasants, according to the time-honoured custom.

" Sublime, that tribute of old Hugo's! " murmured Flaubert, striding ahead, still with his martial air in spite of the red tear-stained face under his big gray hat. " ' Something is going, something is coming. Let us salute the great departures that announce the great arrivals.' "

" On the contrary," replied the American, Harrisse, " I thought it overloaded with rhetoric."

" For my part," said Amic, " I thought the whole ceremony very simple and poetic."

" Alas! " mused Renan, " A string is broken in the Lyre of the century! "

AFTERWORD

THE chief sources for this narrative have been *L'Histoire de ma Vie* and the *Journal Intime* of George Sand, her novels and prefaces and miscellaneous writings, especially the *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, and, above all, her general correspondence in six volumes, her correspondence with Flaubert and with Sainte-Beuve and de Musset, all of which are in the editions of Calmann-Lévy, and her letters to Aurélien de Sèze, recently published by her grand-daughter, Mme. Lauth-Sand, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. The memoirs and reminiscences of her friends have been very helpful, particularly those of Juliette Adam (*Mes Sentiments et Nos Idées avant* 1870, Lemerre), the Journals of the de Goncourts and of Delacroix, Balzac's *Lettres à une Inconnue* and the souvenirs of Henri Amic, as well as the reminiscences and comments of various dramatic and literary critics who were her contemporaries. Other important sources have been the letters of Mazzini, now being published in the splendid *Edizione Nazionale* of his complete works, Chopin's letters to his family (edited by Karlowicz) and Pictet's *Course à Chamounix ; Nella Città del' Amore*, by Raffaelle Barbiera (published by Treves of Milano) ; *Une Retraite Romantique en Suisse*, by R. Bory (Genève, 1926) ; *La Fille de George Sand*, by S. Rocheblave (published by Calmann-Lévy) ; the correspondence with Abbé Rochet (*Nouvelle Revue*, 1896–97), and the anonymous *Lettres de Femme* (*Revue Illustré*, 1890), which seem without doubt to be from George Sand to Michel de Bourges. *George Sand et le Berry*, by L. Vincent (Librairie Champion), although unfortunately marred by an apparent *parti pris* against our heroine, is well documented with interesting material bearing on George Sand's relations with her Berrichon neighbours.

The great and exhaustive *Life of George Sand*, by Wladimir Karénine, published by the Librairie Plon, the fourth and

final volume of which has just appeared, has been invaluable, both for its careful and scholarly presentation and for the large amount of unedited material it contains. There still remains, in the collection bequeathed by the Vicomte Spoelberch de Lovenjoul to the library of the Institut de France at Chantilly, and in many private archives, a vast correspondence, unfortunately not available at present, which may some day shed fuller light on several episodes in this intense and crowded life, but which cannot in any important way affect the fundamental character and principles of George Sand as already so clearly revealed to us.

To Mme. Aurore Lauth-Sand, the grand-daughter and only surviving descendant of George Sand, who still lives in the old Château of Nohant, and whose recent attractive book on *Le Berry de George Sand* (published by Albert Morance), has added such pleasant personal recollections of Nohant and its châtelaine to those we already have, I am indebted for many courtesies and for permission to reproduce several of the portraits and illustrations used in this story of her grandmother's life. To the John Day Company, of New York, I am indebted for permission to use the dialogue between Dr. Piffoêl and Solange, taken from the *Journal Intime*, which they will shortly publish in English. To the librarians in several hospitable European libraries my hearty thanks are due; space permits the mention of only two: M. Marcel Bouteron, of the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, whose knowledge and appreciation of the period of Balzac has been so inspiring and helpful; and Signor Mario Menghini, the learned and sympathetic editor of the letters of Mazzini, at the Biblioteca of the Risorgemento in Rome.

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